

HRIDAY AKASH KE HEERE

By

Swami Akhandananda Saraswati

Hriday Akash Ke Heere
(The Diamonds in the Inner Space of the Heart)

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‘Hriday Akash Ke Heere’ is a translation of a nine-day question-answer session held at Kanpur in 1983, organized by the J.K.Singhania Group. Spiritual seekers asked and Maharajji answered.

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Preamble

By
Swami Akhandananda Saraswati.

Dharma is not a Purushartha in itself.

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are not Purusharthas in themselves. The Purushartha is the sukha created through them, which is the true purpose of human life. The sukha obtained by doing the activities ordained by Dharma – like vrata, daan, Yagna, etc – may come in the present or in future, and that is a Purushartha. Dharma is not a sukha by itself. In the same way, the sukha a person gets from the fulfillment of Kama is a Purushartha. What do we want wealth for? We want it because we feel sukha when we have it. In the same way, in Moksha the sukha is in letting go.

The saguna-sakara Bhagwan is for us to hold in our lap and play with; not to bring out. In saguna, the ‘guna’ means a rope, which is used to tie something, or get bound by. Bhaktas get anand in being tied to Bhagwan. The sukha given by other Purusharthas is limited, but in bhakti, the vritti is *bhagavadaakaara* – the form of Bhagwan – and so, it is sukha-roop. It is the form of sukha, and the sukha it gives is anant. Therefore, bhakti is the Param Purushartha – it is the highest goal of a human being. All Sants are a swarup of Bhagwan; one who knows Bhagwan in the form of *asti* – meaning, that He exists – is a Sant.

When doing, the shabdas do their own work even if you don’t know their meaning, because there is shakti in shabda. This unimaginable power removes the impurities of the mana.

The Gita is a conversation between two friends. What right do we have to understand their talk? While doing paatha of the Gita, we picture the chariot of Arjuna, with Shri Krishna in the driving seat, in the center of the Armies of the Kauravas and Pandavas.

Shri Krishna is saying something and Arjuna is listening to Him. I am taking anand from the scene. In the same way, while doing paatha; it is enough if you get their darshan mentally.

Apart from this, just as doing daan gives a fruit, taking Bhagwan’s name with your tongue also gives a fruit. The sweet feeling of prema for Bhagwan is amrita, and Bhagwan is its bhokta.

You should not call a one-eyed man a *kaanaa*; nor should you call a person who lacks knowledge a fool. Our drishti should be magnanimous for all mankind. The drishti becomes sullied when it goes to anything that is impure, so don’t consider anybody to be bad. See Bhagwan in him; so much so that see Him in even a fish, tortoise, or boar. Your hriday remains pavitra.

Sansara means that, which slides away. That, which is turned away from Bhagwan and moves with the external things that are transient, is the sansara. To not mould your jeevan according to the Dharma-Shastras, and have pride that you are an individual with great qualities, is to be a jeeva who is a sansari.

For spiritual progress a manushya should see Bhagwan in the form of this world of moving and unmoving objects, and consider himself to be Bhagwan's servant. A person is Mukta if this bhava comes into him.

Mein se`vaka charaachara rooparaashi bhagawanta.

(I am the servant of that heap of beauty who is Bhagwan in the form of this world of moving and unmoving objects.)

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Question: - How can anurag for Bhagwan arise in our hriday, and how can the mana become attached to Bhagwan?

Answer: - Anurag is present in all hearts since birth. Actually, it is present even before the birth.

What is anurag? It is a stream of preeti that flows in the hriday. This stream of deep affection starts to flow towards the object of your prema.

When a baby is born it has anurag for its mother. It clings to her even if she gives it a smack. Anurag is not acquired from outside; it is already in the hriday, just the same as we have a shareer, indriyas, buddhi and mana.

Who should anurag be for? It is seen that anurag is natural for that, which is pleasing to the eyes. It is for the sound that is appealing to the ear, the voice of someone who speaks with sweetness. It is for the food that the person relishes, for the touch that is pleasant, and for the object our mana gets attached to. That means, the person puts some color in our heart, and when we see the person through glasses colored by our anurag, we get anurag for that person. The fact is that that, which is dear to the indriyas, and with whom we have a connection, the one who seems to be our own, is the one we get anurag for.

The way to get anurag for Bhagwan is the same. If we have the chance to hear sweet things about Bhagwan we will get anurag for Him. If we eat His prasad we will get anurag for Him. If we look at Him we will get anurag for Him. If we touch Him we will get anurag for Him, and if we inhale the fragrance of His prasad we will get anurag for Him.

If you develop a mental relationship with Bhagwan and the feeling stabilizes, you will get anurag for Him. Just as a person has anurag for his mother and father, child, spouse, friend and others, develop anurag for Bhagwan by considering Him to be your child, your mother, father, friend, Master, or Beloved. Anurag is where mamata is. You get anurag for that, which gives you sukha, and that, which is important to you.

One point about Bhagwan is that He can neither be seen, nor heard, nor smelled. We can certainly get His darshan in a murti or a picture, and smell the tulsi leaves offered to Him.

One method for getting anurag for Bhagwan is to associate with people who have anurag for Him. Another method is to listen to His katha. Listen to the discourse of Mahatmas who speak lovingly of His greatness and glory, as much as possible. There has to be Mahatmya-Gnan; you must know about His majesty and power.

Why do people love Behariji so much? It is because they have heard that Behariji manifested for Haridasji. That is Mahatmya-Gnan. Several kinds of siddhis appeared before Haridasji. Miracles happened before him – that was Mahatmya-Gnan. Similarly, develop a relationship with Bhagwan. Bhagwan manifested in front of this great Mahatma! Thus, if you wish, to increase anurag for Bhagwan, associate with people who have anurag for Him. Take every opportunity to listen to His katha, so that you can get some idea about His power and glory.

When we go to the katha we hear of how compassionate Bhagwan is, how He does kripa on even those who deserve it the least. We think, 'Bhagwan did kripa on even on Kubja, who was not at all eligible for kripa! He did kripa on Ajamil who was such a paapi! Bhagwan does not see the caste; whoever comes into His sharan, takes His name, and prays to Him is able to obtain Him.

When we get gnan about Bhagwan's qualities, about how He is kripalu, sarvagna, and samartha; that He is our Swami and our very own, we become inarticulate with emotion.

What is worth seeing, however, is whether we truly have prema for Bhagwan. Generally, we don't have the kind of prema for Bhagwan we should have. We should evaluate the shraddha and bhakti we have for Bhagwan.

As long as we are successful in our work we feel that we earned it by our own hard work and competence. If asked, 'how did you achieve this?' we say, 'oh, I achieved it'. Or else, you say, 'my relatives did the needful'. And then, 'it was due to my brains and methods.' People have vishvas for Bhagwan as long as things go well for them but when things go badly the vishvas becomes shaky. That is not right.

The fact is, we desire the things of this world, and have prema for Bhagwan in order to get these things. If we want that Bhagwan gives us wealth, makes us the Ruler, gives us victory in our disputes – then, our prema is actually for wealth, power, and victory; not for Bhagwan. If there is nothing worldly we want – we want only Bhagwan and nothing else – it is clear that we have prema for Bhagwan. Then, anurag is automatic. Our anurag is for the object of our desire.

To 'develop anurag for Bhagwan', you should keep the company of Bhagwan's premi-bhaktas as much as possible. You should do shravan about Bhagwan's glory and of His nature. This increases anurag for Bhagwan. It is anurag that enables the mana to get attached to Bhagwan.

Question: - How can the Tamoguna that creeps into our sadhan-bhajan be removed?

Answer: - Where prema is, there is no indolence, drowsiness, or forgetting. Even mistakes are not made when prema is there.

A person stays awake night after night thinking of his loved one. It is my own experience that when I meet a premi after a long time, we sit up all night, talking. Neither feels sleepy.

That means, we start feeling sleepy when we are bored. So, develop a relationship with Bhagwan and attach your mana to Him lovingly; and guard it the

way you guard your wealth, son, husband or wife. You won't feel at all sleepy. Drowsiness, laziness and Tamoguna all come because of a paucity of love and interest.

There is a mistake in our prema. The mistake is that our prema is in our 'I', in our relationships, and in the objects attached to us. Because of this, our prema does not budge even an inch. As long as we are involved in doing something that is within this circle of our prema we don't feel sleepy; we feel sleepy when we do anything that is outside the circle of our interest.

If you feel drowsy when you do japa with a mala, the method to avoid this is to look at one bead while uttering your mantra or Bhagwan's name once, and then pass on to the next bead and next uttering. Take the mala in your hand and do japa in this way, uttering the mantra once as you look at one bead of your mala, and then go on to the next in the same way.

Another method is that if you feel sleepy when doing japa, do japa with your eyes open. Actually, the description given in the Shastras is that your mana will not wander if you keep the pupils of your eyes absolutely unmoving as you do japa. Your mana will stop flitting from here to there and settle on the mantra or name you do japa of. The mana also becomes stable if you keep your shareer absolutely still. To still the mana by keeping the shareer still, and keep the shareer still by keeping the mana still, are helpful methods that can be used by ordinary people. The result of this is that the antahkarana becomes absolutely tranquil, and the mana begins to get connected to Bhagwan. All these are methods that can help a sadhak.

However, if you have vishvas in Bhagwan's kripa, just pray to Him, 'He Prabhu! I am not able to do your japa. I am troubled by laziness and drowsiness. Please do kripa on me so that I don't feel sleepy or lazy.'

Prarthana has great power. If you pray to Bhagwan with staunch vishvas that, which seems impossible will become possible. We read in the Puranas that someone lifted a mountain, someone crossed over an ocean, or did some other

marvelous deed. These are not imagined deeds or exaggeration. A person gets such shakti when he has shraddha and vishvas in Bhagwan.

Therefore, if you feel that there is some form of lacking in you, take Bhagwan's name to remove the lacking. Pray to Bhagwan. Do His puja-upasana. If you have an inclination for Vedanta, try with all your might and make your sankalpa unshakable. Just as a strong-minded person keeps his hand on his chest until he gives it the command to move, and the hand obeys his command, the mana should also be obedient to your will and command.

Your mana is your servant; you are not its servant. Be its Master. Command your mana. Train it to be obedient. The horse you ride should not be allowed to go on whichever path it wants; it should go where you want it to go. The mana is a mount that should take you on the path of your choice.

By praying to Bhagwan, by His help and shakti, there is nothing we cannot achieve if we so desire. We should go ahead with the vishvas that that we will achieve our goal by His kripa. Success will be achieved!

Question: - Bhagwan's kripa is showering on us, but how can we experience it?

Answer: - You ask this because you feel that Bhagwan's kripa is showering on you. In this, the basic point is that when things go the way we want we feel Bhagwan's kripa is there, but when things go against us we feel His kripa is lacking.

That means we don't recognize His kripa; nor do we attach importance to kripa. We give importance to our vasanas and wishes, instead of His kripa. 'Whatever Bhagwan does, His kripa is in it; it is mangal.'

There is a story. There was a Raja. His mantra had a habit of saying, 'whatever Bhagwan does is mangal' whatever happened. In Sanskrit, the word 'mangal' means, 'to go ahead; to progress.' That means, every kriya of ours takes us forward; only, we don't recognize it.

One day the Raja was inspecting a new sword. The sword was very sharp and the top of his thumb got cut off. The mantri said, as per his habit, 'this is mangal'. The Raja was furious. He ordered the Mantri to be put into jail. One day the Raja rode out into the forest. Some dacoits caught him – they were looking for a man to offer as a human sacrifice to the Devi.

When the pujari examined the prospective sacrifice, he said, 'this man is not fit to offer the Devi. His thumb is deformed. Set him free.'

The Raja was set free. As he returned to his city, he remembered the words of his mantri, that whatever happens is mangal. 'This is certainly true for me,' he thought. 'Had my thumb not been cut, I would have been killed as a sacrifice at the Devi's alter. I would never have been set free.'

When he reached his palace, he ordered that the mantri should be freed and brought to him. When the mantri came, the Raja asked him, 'Tell me, what is mangal in your spending such a long time in jail?'

'Maharaj, had I not been in jail I would have been with you. You would have been set free because of your thumb, but I would have been sacrificed to the Devi. Bhagwan saved you by cutting off the top of your thumb, and saved me by keeping me in jail. That is the mangal.'

Whatever Bhagwan ordains is mangal in every way. We feel His kripa is lacking or missing, when we are lead by our vasanas. We want that Bhagwan should do what we want and what we feel is best. We don't look at what Bhagwan wants. We don't look at His sankalpa, or His satta, or His Gnan. We don't see the anand He gives; we only see our own desires and urges. That is why we see doshas in what Bhagwan does, instead of seeing His kripa.

Bhagwan's kripa is independent. Just as Bhagwan is free to do whatever He likes, so is His kripa. Kripa comes in some forms at times and other forms at times, because Bhagwan is all forms. He is everything!

One form of Bhagwan is '*sadachchaahamarjuna*' – Bhagwan tells Arjuna in the Gita that He is the Sat as well as the asat; He is the eternal, non-dual Satya that

cannot be negated, and He is the transient satya that is perceived as real by people. Then Bhagwan goes on to say that He is neither the Sat nor the asat! He is the Sat, the asat, and He is also beyond both! This is Bhagwan's swarup.

Bhagwan is filled with kripa, and His kripa is filled with Him, so, if you see kripa in only some particular form, believing that He is doing kripa if He gives you wealth, the kind of shareer you want, or so much power, and also a family to your liking – then you will never recognize His kripa.

You want that Bhagwan should do the work and what He does should be according to what you want. If it comes in the form of what you want you accept it to be His kripa, but you don't accept it as His kripa if He does what He wants! This way, you will never have the anubhav of His kripa in its real form.

One Mahatma used to say, 'when things happen that suit you, you are pleased. When things happen that don't suit you, you should think about who is pleased with what has happened. Oh, it is our Beloved who is pleased! We should be doubly happy when our Beloved is happy!'

The Neeti-Shastra says that we should win over all others, but lose before our son. A man feels happy when his son is more successful than he is. In the same way, when Bhagwan does what He wants instead of doing what you want, you should mould yourself in such a way that you give greater importance to His choice than to your own ego, vanity, mamata and wishes. You should feel contented that Bhagwan did what He wanted.

See Bhagwan's hand in whatever happens. He is sarvagna, sarva-shakti, and supremely compassionate. Whatever object or activity He sends us, whatever bhoga comes to us, the family we have, etc are filled with His kripa.

A mother bathes her baby in hot water and scrubs soap to make him clean. The baby feels that his mother is unnecessarily unkind to him. The mother is only doing what is good for her baby. She is washing off the dirt from his shareer.

When you try to recognize Bhagwan's kripa and begin to succeed in recognizing it, you will experience it in everything that happens. The kripa will be seen clearly.

Kripa is not recognized because it is not respected. A person experiences everything as Bhagwan's kripa when he respects it in every form. In this, the primary factor should not be what you want; Bhagwan's wish is primary. This is the principle in Bhakti as well as in Vedanta.

The more we let go of our personal preferences the closer we get to our swarup. Don't try to make Bhagwan your servant! One man went to Vrindavan to do Behariji's darshan. He prayed to Behariji, 'He Bhagwan, I want a son.' Behariji was silent, but the man assumed He had heard and consented. He said, 'listen, Bhagwan, I want the son to be born within a year.' He paused for a moment and continued. 'I want my son to be healthy and good-looking. I want him to be intelligent and obedient, and live to great old age.' Bhagwan remained silent.

Another man was standing next to him, listening to his one-sided conversation with Behariji. He said to himself, 'this man doesn't want Behariji. He wants a servant who will do what he wants him to do!' To take Bhagwan to a stage where we disdain His Gnan, wanting Him to do things according to our gnan; to disrespect the anand He has given us and ask for anand according to our preference, to not value the jeevan He has given us and want something different is to insult Him!

We should place ourselves before Bhagwan like this – '*jyon-hee-jyon hee rakhiyata haun, tyon-hee-tyin hee rahiyata haun, he`hari*' – I will live as You keep me, He Hari!' This will happen only when you get the anubhav of Bhagwan's kripa.

The Shrimad Bhagwat says:

Tatte`nukampaa susameekshamaano.

Just go on seeing Bhagwan's kripa. 'Su' means, 'very good'. Don't think, 'Bhagwan's kripa will come one day.' What is it that is coming now? That is also His kripa! It is not that His kripa is absent just now; that He has become very hard-hearted in giving us just the opposite of what we want! Bhagwan's kripa is inherent even in the things you don't want. You should recognize it in everything. Stay the way He keeps you. The paths of our karma and Bhagwan's shakti are to be seen. We should open our hriday, our vani, and our shareer and place them

before Bhagwan. We should bend before Him everything we have and remember that it is He who moves our hriday, our vani and our shareer.

Abhiman is absolutely false. When a person surrenders totally to Bhagwan, he becomes Bhagwan's heir – '*jeeve`ta yo mukttipade` sadaayabhaag`*'. He is heir to everything that Bhagwan has, provided he gives up his restlessness, vasanas, abhiman, and mamata, and takes sharan in Bhagwan. He should offer himself up to Bhagwan, along with everything that belongs to him.

Question: - How should we do Bhagwan's Prarthana?

Answer: - A Prarthana is something you have to do, sometimes to your mother and father, sometimes to your grandfather and grandmother, and sometimes to your spouse. The kind of Prarthana you do at home is the same kind you should do to Bhagwan.

Prarthana means to ask Bhagwan with your vani and hriday, for what you consider to be important and precious. There should be a decision in your mind that what you want is the best thing, and there should be entreaty for it to be granted to you. In any case we keep asking the people in this world for something or another. The world does not have the capacity to fulfill our wishes. Nobody in this world is worthy for asking for what we really want. Bhagwan alone can fulfill our highest desires.

The first point in this is that prarthana should be done only to Bhagwan, not the paltry people of this world. The second point is that the prarthana should be for obtaining that Prabhu who is the greatest goal of our jeevan. A person's jeevan is complete when he reaches that goal. Prarthana should not be for petty, paltry things. It is said that in prarthana, the person who is praying should be conscious of his own inadequacies, weaknesses, and faults. He should confess them before Bhagwan, saying, 'Prabhu, I have these faults. You are antaryami. You are sarvagna. You know that I have these faults.'

However, it is not enough to confess your faults to Bhagwan. When you understand your faults and bring them to your vani they become clear to you. Knowing them is not enough either; it is necessary that you tell them to Bhagwan honestly and openly and sincerely, without justifying them or excusing yourself.

There is one more point. People have a lot of abhiman that they have only good qualities. This abhiman weighs them down and leads to their downfall. So, give up your abhiman and understand your doshas, and then place them before Bhagwan. This is called 'nivedan'. The meaning of doing nivedan is, Bhagwan can punish us, make us undertake some penance, or forgive us – it is His choice.

Bhagwan punishes, gives a penance, or pardons. At times it happens that He listens to our nivedan and forgives us, and even feels pleased about our doshas! There is no rule to stop Bhagwan from doing what He chooses, or curtail His svabhava in any way. At times, He breaks His own rules to do kripa on a bhakta.

Nivedan should be done the way Goswami Tulsidasji, Surdasji, and other Mahatmas have done. They spoke about their own pathetic state, and all their inadequacies were removed. There is no need to tell the world about your problems; and a pitiable state never endures before Bhagwan.

Tell Bhagwan about your doshas with the simplicity of a child, and be prepared to accept whatever He gives – punishment, penance or pardon. See in which form Bhagwan does kripa on you, because Bhagwan sometimes feels pleased when He sees the doshas of those who have taken sharan in Him. For example, when Shri Krishna told lies to Yashoda Maiya, saying, 'I have not eaten clay', or, 'I did this because of that person', Maiya felt happy that her son's buddhi was becoming very sharp.

In the same way Bhagwan also sees how a jeeva uses his brains and makes excuses and He forgives the fault at times because He is pleased. However, you should not pray with the hope of being forgiven. You should confess everything and trust in Him to do what is best.

The second thing should be in your prarthana is – what is it that you should actually want to ask for? Do you want Bhagwan to give you wealth, bhoga,

aishwarya, son, family, shareer, sadguna-sadbhava, prema for Bhagwan, bhakti for Him, His darshan, and other things you don't have? You should tell Him clearly about what you want from Him. 'He Prabhu! These are the desires of my mana. Please fulfill them if You feel fit, or destroy them if You feel they are inappropriate, or change them as You wish.' You should leave it in Bhagwan's hands whether He sees fit to grant what you ask for, and surrender completely to Him.

After this, the bhakta remembers his lack of eligibility for kripa. 'I am not fit to achieve these things.' Now, instead of looking at yourself and asking Bhagwan to remove your doshas and give you gunas, you should investigate Bhagwan's gunas. He carries out the work of His bhaktas, doing kripa on even the vulture, Kubja, Ajamil and Pingla!

Stop thinking about your own guna-doshas, and think about Bhagwan's undue kripa and His gunas. Bhagwan is beyond anything you can imagine. He is the abode of endless virtues. What is the need to look at yourself?

You must have heard about Shri Vallabh Acharyaji Maharaj coming to Surdasji's house one day, as he walked on the bank of the Yamuna. 'A great poet lives here,' he was told. 'He sings beautifully. He is a great bhakta of Bhagwan.' Shri Vallabhacharyaji went to Surdas and asked him to sing something. Surdasji picked up his single-string instrument and sang,

He` hari, haun saba patitana ko raaya,

He` hari, haun saba patitana ko teeko.

(Oh Hari, I am the king of the downfallen, I am the foremost among the downfallen.)

Vallabhacharyaji listened to him for a long time. Then he caught Surdasji's head. 'Oh Sur!' he said, 'you are blind outside and blind inside! What are you singing about being the king of the downfallen? Why don't you sing about Bhagwan's gunas? Why sing about your own state?'

Surdasji's inner vision opened that instant and this song burst from his lips –

*Shobhita kara navaneeta liye`, ghutaruvana chalat,
shyaama mani-aangana, mukha dadhi le`pa kiye`.*

Bhagwan looks beautiful, with a ball of butter in His hand, crawling on the blue, gem-studded courtyard, with curd smeared on His face.

As soon as Vallabhacharyaji's hand rested on Surdasji's head, the tone of his bhajans changed completely. Earlier, he felt abject and lowly; now he began to get Bhagwan's darshan and see His leelas in his mana.

People felt suspicious about how Surdasji, being blind, could describe Bhagwan's appearance so well. Bhaktas said, 'he gets Bhagwan's darshan, and that is why he described Bhagwan's dress so accurately.' Unable to believe this, the priests decided to test Surdasji. They took him to Gokul and said, 'now describe Bhagwan.' That day Bhagwan was dressed with flowers, no garments. He was completely naked. Surdasji began to sing, '*aaja hari de`khe` nangam-nangaa* – today I saw Hari completely naked, without any clothes!'

We observe that almost every manushya hovers round his 'I', his mamata, his vasanas, vichars, and logic. However, if the mana moves away from these and does dhyana of Bhagwan's beauty, kripa, the sneha and vatsalya that showers from His eyes, the anand He spreads with His smile, the radiance of His nails, the gleam of His teeth, and the caprice of His crown, he will begin to think about Bhagwan constantly instead of thinking about himself. He will be drawn to Bhagwan and stop thinking of his own guna-doshas.

A state comes in which he has no need to do anything. The mana is utterly at peace. The person is at peace, free of all desires.

This is how prarthana gradually takes us towards fulfillment. That is the state where Bhagwan's actual, eternal satta manifests. This satta contains Gnan that can never be negated. There is sublime beauty that is free of the divisions of bhakta and bhogya, gnata and gnan, karta and karma, etc. This Gnan that manifests is Bhagwan's satta.

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Question: - Materialism rules the Kali Yuga completely. That being the case, how should a manushya live in order to be free of materialism?

Answer: - There are all kinds of people in every Yuga. Even in the Satya Yuga there are people who do bad things, and even in the Kali Yuga there are people who do good things. So, it is not proper to blame the kaala – the Kali Yuga – but take ashray in Bhagwan and try to keep your mana good. Kaala is not in control of any jeeva. It is Bhagwan's doing, it is His shakti and His sankalpa. This is the principle of the saguna-vada, the principle of the Ishwara with form and attributes.

In the Darshan-Shastra, Sankhya, and Yoga, kaala is believed to be the vritti of the Mahat-Tattva. It is considered to be a prakrit-padartha, which means a natural substance. In the Nyaya and Mimansa philosophies kaala is said to be a dravya, meaning a fluid. Vyakaran says that kaala is vivaksha – it is a purpose, an intention. Vedanta states that kaala is a vritti of avidya.

Therefore, for a person who wants to attach his mana to Bhagwan, or do sat-karmas, it is perfectly possible for Satyuga, Treta Yuga, or Dwapar Yuga to come and abide in his hriday. Kali Yuga does not enter the mana of such a person.

Materialism rules only those whose mana is attracted to worldly objects. When a person's mana is of a superior level materialism does not influence him. He gets vairagya for anything worldly. Worldly matters become distasteful for him. So don't look at the svabhava of the kaala. Do as much bhajan as you can, and do Satsang. Kali Yuga can do you no harm unless you merge into it and become its friend.

This is how the Vedas describe the Yugas:

*Kalih shayaano bhavati, sanjihaanastu dvaaparah,
uttishthamstre`taa bhavati, kritam sampadyate` charan.*

‘Kalih shayaano bhavati’ means, when a manushya becomes a total stranger to the Ishwara and Dharma, and slumbers, then he is in the Kali Yuga. That means, when we don’t look at our hriday and look at others, we are in the Kali Yuga. When we look at the outside world instead of looking at the Bhagwan in our hriday, it is the Kali Yuga.

Kali Yuga does not come from outside. It comes when we give it some space in our hriday, and then settles firmly in it. *‘Sanjihaanastu dvaaparah’* – when we turn on our side it is called the Dwapar Yuga. That means, we are uncertain about what is right and what is wrong.

Kali Yuga is the state is unconsciousness or slumber, and Dwapar is the state of doubt. When we stand up to obtain our goal, it is called the Treta Yuga – *‘uttishthamstre`taa bhavati’*. When we start to walk towards Satya – towards the Ishwara – it is called the Satya Yuga. In this state we focus more on our hriday than on the external world – *‘kritam samoadyate` charan’*.

It is described in the Bhagwat that Kali Yuga stays in the gambling house etc, Dwapar Yuga stays where there is dispute and quarrelling, Treta stays where Yagna-Yaag and other rituals are done, and the Satya Yuga stays where Bhagwan’s Gnan-dhyana are done, and where a manushya gets His anubhav. So, if not for the whole world, for your own sake at least, you can create Satyuga and be free of the rule of materialism.

The flow of the sansara is in the hands of the Ishwara. You can take the Ishwara’s support and go against the flow. The antaryami inspires paurush. There are many people in the world even in present times, who remain unaffected by the Yuga and by materialism. There is no need for you to be influenced by them either.

If you have an inclination to earn wealth, do so by all means, because Artha is also a Purushartha; so are bhoga and Dharma. None of these are to be disdained. The - Purushartha, however, is to attach our hriday to Bhagwan. The influence of materialism is certainly evident all around, but there are paths that are available for those who wish to escape from it.

Question: - The mana is restless and fickle. What are the methods by which a manushya can control it and attach it to Bhagwan?

Answer: - It is true that the mana is restless. This is also given in the Shastras. The mana's restlessness should be connected to Bhagwan. The mana's restlessness should be attached to Bhagwan.

In my village I saw how farmers yoked a young untrained ox with an ox that was mature and trained when a field had to be ploughed. At first the young ox would be very restless, but after some time it became calm and worked alongside the older ox.

Similarly, attach your restless mana to people who are spiritually evolved. This is a bit difficult in the beginning, but so what? Do paatha. It doesn't matter if the meaning of fifty words rushes into your brain. This restlessness is good. Do japa, and let your mana wander round; there is no harm in this. There is no real harm in restlessness, but it should be controlled.

Pay attention to this: chant the name of Rama, stretching it for a second or two. Raa.....aam, Raaa.....aaam. The mana will wander in-between two names, but the glory of Rama-naam is in your hriday, and that will make you say the name repeatedly. Your hriday has vishvas that this is Bhagwan's name. Since you say Rama-naam repeatedly, it means you also have shraddha. Your tongue moves because you move it; thus, kriya is also there.

When shraddha, the mana, kriya and prema combine, what is there to be afraid of? Your mana will flit round for a while and then it will come back and settle. Therefore, you should not worry about your mana being restless; you should make use of its restlessness. Do lots of paatha, lots of japa, and carry on with your ordained duties with all zeal. Don't do this halfheartedly. When you do anything halfheartedly your mana becomes more restless. So, do your work wholeheartedly.

It is the norm that your mana will be stable on the object you have prema for. If you have prema for the work you do your mana will not be at all restless. If someone you have prema for is to come at a certain time and he doesn't come,

how do you think of him? When you meet somebody you love you get so engrossed that you are unaware of the time passing.

Therefore, you should first seek within yourself, what it is that you really want. And, if you truly want your mana to be settled and stable, your mana will become absolutely stable. Its restlessness will be removed.

Question: - There are people who are not able to control their mana. How can they overcome the Maya of this sansara?

Answer: - Bhagwan has created ways for everything. If the mana has become inert in this sansara there is no way by which the person can overcome this sansara's Maya. However, the fact is that nobody's mana becomes totally inert. There is always some awareness and some unawareness, some restlessness and some laxity that keep coming into the mana. So, don't become disheartened about your mana.

Your mana is not your master; it is your servant. For example, you can place your hand on your chest and tell it to stay there until you tell it to move. The hand obeys your will. The mana is the same. You can keep it controlled because the mana, also, has a key. The mana never remains empty – it always mingles with some form, object or activity, and this is how the prana of the mana can be caught.

Keep a sharp watch and see what your mana gets attached to. It is bound to linger on something or another. Catch the object your mana is attached to, and then catch the mana. Then, keep turning that object; your mana will turn with it. Think of it this way – there is a snake and there is a snake charmer who plays the been. The snake loves the sound of the been, and it begins to sway and dance to the rhythm of the music. It clings to the been and when the snake charmer turns, the snake also turns with the been it is clinging to. In the same way, learn to recognize what is dear to your mana and then bring bhagavad-bhava into it.

Look; there is a Shaligram that is found in the Gandaki river. People place it in their home and worship it. There is a Narmadeshwara that is found in the river Narmada. People establish it in a Mandir and worship it. They create a bhagavad-buddhi in the stones, worshipping them as the sakshat Bhagwan. They believe that Vishnu Bhagwan is seated in the Shaligram Shila, with His Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma, wearing a crown, kundal, and a multicolored garland of wild flowers.

Gradually they come to know of the glory of the Shaligram, about how Bhagwan comes into the form of this rounded stone. Mahatva-buddhi is created. The person begins to get the darshan of Bhagwan in the Shaligram.

Then they start giving serious thought to what Chaturbhuj Narayana is. They understand that the Shaligram is a symbol of the four-armed Narayana. They understand that it is also a symbol of the sakshat paripoorna Brahman.

And, who is in the form of the Narmadeshwara? It is Shiva incarnate! Which Shankar Bhagwan is it? It is Shankar in whose matted locks Gangaji flows, on whose forehead the Chandrama stays, who has a fair complexion and three eyes, who holds a trident and a damaroo in His hands! To look at, it is a Shivalinga, but it is actually the sakshat Shankar Bhagwan.

Who is this Shankar? He is unborn, undying, eternal, infinite and unchanging. Think of the Paramatma in this way when you see a Shivalinga. Gradually, fill your mana with thoughts of Bhagwan's glory and majesty, and then progress. Your mana will get fully attached to Bhagwan, and you will be freed of the Maya of this sansara.

The restlessness of your mana can also be removed by keeping company of people whose mana is not restless. And, what happens when your loved one doesn't come at the time when he was expected to come? Then, your mana becomes so agitated that its restlessness is removed!

Catch the loved one whose dhyana you do, for whom you have prema. Then, slowly begin to see Bhagwan in that person, and then catch Bhagwan. Just as

Bhagwan is present in the hriday of that person, He is also present in your hriday. There is no need to look for Him in other places; look for Him in your own hriday.

Question: - How should a person live, to make his mana and buddhi shuddha?

Answer: - If I ask you to give me a glass of shuddha water, and you mix honey or sugar in it, I will tell you, 'this is not shuddha water.' If you add some drops of lemon juice, I will say the same thing. Water will be shuddha only when nothing is added to it.

In the same way, when nothing is added to our mana and buddhi, only then are they shuddha. The Shastras give many methods for purifying the mana. They are all suitable for you to use.

- (i) The first point is whether the things you keep gathering in the world are shuddha or not. Shri Manuji says that of all the different items you use, the most important is the pavitrata of wealth. A manushya whose wealth is pure is the most pavitra person. People wash their hands with clay and bathe several times a day, to be pavitra. This is not enough to make a person pavitra. Pavitrata comes when a person's wealth is pavitra.
- (ii) The second point is whether your food, drink, and bhoga are pavitra or not. In the opinion of Shri Ramanuja Acharyaji Maharaj, what we eat and drink should not be sullied by any impurity. Everything connected to them should also be pavitra – the utensils, the place they are prepared in, the condiments added to them, and the person who prepares the food. The food must, of course, be pavitra by nature, and it should be rightfully yours to eat. Then, our antahkarana becomes pavitra, our mana and buddhi become pavitra.
- (iii) The third point is that whatever we eat should first be offered to Bhagwan as bhoga. This removes the doshas in the food. All the things in this world belong to Bhagwan.

- (iv) In the opinion of Shri Shankaracharya bhagavan, food does not mean only what we consume with our mouth; it includes everything we absorb through our senses. For example, the things we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, smell with our nose, touch with our skin – all this is intake. It is also a kind of food.

If we see dirty scenes with our eyes, the dirt comes into our mana. If we hear about reprehensible things done by people, our mana becomes sullied. We should be alert whether the things we touch inflame lust and desire, or whether they quiet the passions. In the same way, intake is also done through the nose and tongue. Food is what we take in from the outside world. If our intake is shuddha, our mana and buddhi will also be shuddha.

- (v) What are your activities? What kind of work do you do? These days, the measure of work and activities has become something different. People choose to do only the things they like to do. Even we, Mahatmas, ask a person who comes to us, ‘which is the form of Bhagwan you like? Which name of Bhagwan do you like?’ We know that people will not listen to us if we tell them to do anything that is against their inclination. The result of this is that your mana becomes even stronger, and refuses to be controlled. So, if you wish to keep your mana controlled, you should practice doing things that are against the inclination of your mana. Do japa of Bhagwan, do His dhyana. Your mana will become controlled. The important fact is that your resolve has to be firm. You will not be able to sustain your effort if your resolve is not firm.
- (vi) Is the work you do in keeping with samyam, or in keeping with uchhrinkhalta? People say whatever comes into their mana, do whatever they feel like doing, ask for whatever they are attracted to, and take what they feel like taking. This is not the way to make the mana shuddha. In this, you have to see whether it is appropriate to say what comes into your mana. You must evaluate the rightness of following the urges of your mana; otherwise, your mana will lead you into doing all kinds of wrong things.

Your mana becomes shuddha when you control it and stop yourself from doing what should not be done.

- (vii) Is 'who' in your bhavna or not? You should not show disrespect to anybody. If somebody does something you don't like, let him. He also has his own inclinations which have, perhaps, come from a previous birth. As far as possible, don't let petty things create ill-will and strife; neither in your mana, nor outside. When you have sadbhava for all, then your mana becomes pavitra, and the buddhi becomes shuddha.

There is a story in the Puranas that Indra once invited Raja to Swarga. He gave a grand reception for him. All the Devtas came. Indra introduced them to Pururva. 'This is Agni Devta. This is Varun Devta.....' Pururva folded his hands respectfully to each Devta as he was introduced. When they went a bit further, they came to the Devta of wealth and the Devta of bhoga and kama. Indra told Pururva, 'this is the Devta of Artha, and this is the Devta of Kama.' Raja Pururva did not do namaskara to these two Devtas.

The Devtas of Artha and Kama were offended by this slight. They gave a shaap to Pururva. 'Dhan will be with you but you won't get the sukha of dhan. You will have all the amenities for bhoga but you will not get the sukha of bhoga.' This is why Pururva had to wander from village to village like a mad man, even though he was an Emperor. Seeing his condition, even Urvashi – the celestial nymph – left him.

So, as far as possible, we should not insult anybody, even if consider them to be bad. We should always have sadbhava for everybody in our hriday. Fold your hands to the rich and to the poor, to the beautiful and the ugly. An ansha of the Ishwara is in all. This is an art. What you see is just His ansha.

- (viii) How much respect do you have for vichar? Do you give serious, objective thought before you form an opinion about somebody, or is your opinion formed on what you have heard people say? Your opinion should be based on unbiased vichar.
- (ix) There is one more method for the shuddhi of your mana and buddhi. Sit peacefully for a little while every day. Empty your mana of the sansara

or any sankalpa. When you begin to get anand in solitary tranquility your mana and buddhi will automatically become shuddha.

- (x) The more chintan you do of the shuddha vastu – the Ishwara – the more your mana will move away from everything that is ashuddha. Your mana is like a small child. It has to be pampered at first. You have to say, ‘yes, that is right’ at first, and then teach it to discern between the Satya and the asat.
- (xi) You should do positive chintan about what is given in the Shastras, because they are written with some specific viewpoint. Do you think that everything given in the Shastras is the talk of fools? Or, do you realize that things are said for the benefit of people in some place, time, society, or individual? A person will not understand the underlying purpose of the Shastras unless he ponders seriously with an open mind.
- (xii) If you refuse to support any bad thought that comes into your mana due to personal aversions, and refuse to act on it, your mana will become fully pavitra. All that is needed is an earnest desire to lead a pavitra jeevan.

Question: - By inculcating the ideals of the Sants into our jeevan, we can destroy the sthoola vasanas; but how can the sookshma vasanas be destroyed?

Answer: - Sookshma vasanas are destroyed by doing Bhagwan’s bhajan. Remember, Bhagwan is observing all you’re your actions. You don’t see Him, but He sees you, because He stays in your hriday. Everything is open before Him. On the one hand is the form of the vishays, and on the other hand are your vasanas. Behind and within everyone and everything, is the antaryami Bhagwan, smiling.

There is no point in talking about others. Make a firm resolve that you will not support any bad thought that comes into your mana, with your buddhi, and you won’t allow any bad thought to be brought into action. This is enough to help you make a considerable progress.

Question: - It is very difficult to find a Sant in the Kali Yuga in the first place. Even if we do meet a Sant we are not able to recognize whether he is a true Sant or a fraud. Please describe the gunas of a Sant to enable us to recognize a true Sant if we have the good fortune to meet one.

Answer: - The best thing for you to do is Satsang. There are lots of descriptions of Sants in the Shastras. The Gita has a number of such descriptions. The Sthitapragna is described in the second chapter, the gunas of a bhakta are described in the twelfth chapter, the gunas of a gunateeta are described in the fourteenth chapter, the Daivi Sampatti is described in the sixteenth chapter, and the eighteenth chapter describes a viveki jignasu – a spiritual seeker who has discrimination. You should sit down and do chintan of your own guna. Establish a touchstone in your mana to test your own gunas.

Thoughts about harming anybody are not favorable for a Satpurusha. A Satpurusha is one who never wants to harm anybody even unknowingly, let alone intentionally. A person who becomes one with the Paramatma, and sees all beings as being one with his Atma, is a Sant. He has japa on his tongue and tapa in his jeevan.

How should a person speak? Truth is essential, you should not tell lies. What you say should be of benefit for all, and not harmful for anybody. This is what the talk of a Satpurusha is like. His speaking is the truth, but is never bitter or hurtful. It is sweet for the one who hears. Speech should be satya, hita, priya, and mita. That means speak the truth but say what is beneficial for all. Say it with sweetness so it is pleasing to hear, and say it in brief. Don't elaborate at length. What you say should be relevant and appropriate for the occasion.

It is not proper to sing wedding songs at a funeral, nor talk about death at a wedding. Both are inappropriate. Your speech should be beneficial, true, and it should not cause agitation. When you see a person who talks like this you will recognize that he is a Satpurusha.

You should not see the chandan and mala and the color of his clothes – these are not indications of a Satpurusha. A Satpurusha's guna is that his hriday, vani, and karmas are all filled with sadbhava.

Bhavabhooti, the author of 'Ramcharit' has given the characteristics of a Satpurusha in this famous play.

What is the quintessence of a Satpurusha's jeevan? His lifestyle is agreeable and so is his livelihood. He has a feeling of benevolence for all. His jeevan has the sweetness of humility. It is so full of sweetness that he showers anand wherever he goes. His vani is restrained; he only speaks when he needs to. He never indulges in idle prattle. He says what is of universal benefit. His behavior is the same, whether he is talking to a poor man or a rich man, today or tomorrow, every day or after many days. This is how the behavior of a Satpurusha is described.

You know what is good and what is bad. You should go on holding to what your buddhi understands to be good, and let go of all that your buddhi understands to be bad. Somebody asked me one day, 'Maharaj, I have not read the Shastras. I don't know the rules of what should be eaten and what we should not eat. I am confused about this. Please tell me what I should eat and what I shouldn't.'

I asked him if he has Thakurji in his house. He told me that puja of Thakurji is done every day at his home. 'Then it is very simple,' I told him. 'You should eat what you can offer to Thakurji as bhoga, and what is not to be offered to Him. You will soon understand what you should eat and what you shouldn't.'

People who are earnest about improving their mana, buddhi, and jeevan have a thousand ways for doing so. There is no need to get disheartened. If the resolve is firm you can stay on the right path whether it is the Kali Yuga or an even worse period of time.

Question: - The Paramartha is straightforward but vyavhar is very tricky. Please do kripa on us and explain how our mana can remain attached to Bhagwan even when we are engrossed in our work.

Answer: - I feel very happy to hear that you feel the path to Paramartha is straightforward and easy, but the path of vyavhar is difficult.

A lot of strategy and trickery is involved in vyavhar, whereas none of these are needed when walking on the path to Bhagwan. So, what you say is perfectly true; the path to Bhagwan is straight and easy. Bhagwan makes the path easy for His bhaktas who want to go to Him. In fact, He even catches His bhakta hand and pulls him to Himself.

On one hand Rukmini wants to obtain Bhagwan Shri Krishna. On the other hand Shishupal and Jarasandh have arranged their large armies in the city to make sure that Shri Krishna did not take Rukmini away. Bhagwan's arm, however, is very long! He pulled Rukmini out of the crowd before anyone realized what was happening!

Thus we see that is the desire for Him in our mana is genuine Bhagwan helps us, and we are able to walk on the path to Bhagwan with ease.

Now, regarding vyavhar, keep a sheet of paper with your accounts Register. Write Bhagwan's name on it before starting the day's work and then start your work. Whenever you get a respite from your work, write His name again, and write it when you end the day's work. If you want to go somewhere, say Bhagwan's name before leaving, and say it again when you come back. By doing this you will remember Bhagwan in between also. These are simple things that can be done very easily. So, think of Bhagwan in between whatever you are doing. Then, you will remember Him in your vyavhar as well.

Connect Bhagwan's name to your jeevan. If you want to take a bath, take the names of the rivers He loves – '*gange`shu cha yamune`shu cha`*' while bathing. Before putting your feet on the ground in the morning, bow down to the dharati – the earth – she is our mother. Think of her Swami, and then put your feet on the ground. When you sit down for a meal, offer the food to Bhagwan as bhoga

before you start eating. If you want to have a discussion with somebody, take Bhagwan's name before starting the discussion. Pray for the ability to convey your viewpoint in the right manner.

The fact is Bhagwan is sitting at the point where the thought of your vyavhar rises. Just as everything is seen in the light of the sun, everything is perceived in the light of Bhagwan. We perceive a man sitting before us, and we look at him with our eyes. We forget that light is between us. We look at the man without thinking of the light that enables us to see. In fact, we even forget our own eyes that give us vision. Whatever we perceive in the world is by the light of the Ishwara in our hriday.

Nobody in this world is as real as Bhagwan. If we are in one shareer, the Parameshwara is in the whole world! So, first see the Ishwara in you, and then see Him in the other, and then do vyavhar. This doesn't take any time or physical effort. All you have to do is remain awake and alert.

The things you see, and everything that exists, is made by the Ishwara. The Ishwara has made the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space, of which all matter is made. You should see the artist whose creation this whole world is, whenever you look at anything.

There was a man who lived in Lucknow. He faced a dilemma, 'should I do vyavhar or Ishwara-smaran?' A siddha Mahatma had come to Lucknow. The man decided to go and ask him. He went, taking a bouquet of beautiful flowers to offer to the Mahatma. Baba began to examine the flowers with great interest. He did not look at the man at all. Two minutes passed, five minutes passed, ten minutes passed. Baba was rapt in his admiration of the flowers. The man became frustrated. 'Maharaj, 'he exclaimed. 'I made a big mistake by bringing the flowers! Had I not brought them you would have looked at me.'

Hearing this, the Mahatma looked up. 'Very well,' he said. 'I will throw away this beautiful bunch of flowers.'

'No, please don't do that,' said the man. 'I had it made up with great prema.'

Baba began to smile. He said, 'all right. You tell me what you want me to do.'

The man said, 'I want you to look at me and also the flowers.'

In the same way, this sansara is a bunch of flowers made by the Ishwara. This artist – the Ishwara – has made such a picture that in seeing it, we forget its Creator! We don't think of Him at all. To not remember Bhagwan is ingratitude. It is a very big dosha.

What is the dosha?

The dosha is that you have to pay a tax to the city's municipality for the house you live in. You have to pay Land Tax. Bhagwan has not imposed any tax for the earth He created for you. You pay Water Tax for the water that comes into the taps in your house. Bhagwan showers rain in plenty, keeping the earth filled with water and the rivers flowing. The Ishwara has kept no tax on this water.

You have to pay for the electricity you use for lights, fans, and other items. Nobody pays for the light of the sun and the moon. You pay for the fan that keeps the air circulating, but nobody pays for the air you breathe, without which you cannot stay alive.

The sound that comes out of my mouth reaches your ears, and what you say reaches my ears. We go for a walk, and wander here and there. We fly in airplanes. Bhagwan has not kept any tax for the air or the space we use. He gave us a heart, emotions, feelings, the ability to do vichar; He made us thinking beings. He gave us legs to walk with, eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to work with, and a mouth to eat, drink and speak with. He gave us such an excellent buddhi that we became the most evolved species in creation.

And, we have become so ungrateful that we have forgotten Him, rushing here and there in the sansara while He watches us. He sits in our hriday and looks at us, and we have turned away from Him.

Tau de`khata avaguna karoon, kaise` toko bhaaun.

(I do all kinds of wrong things with You watching; how will You approve of me?)

If we understand our mistakes and remain watchful, we can do Bhagwan's smaran even while doing our work. There is a shloka in the Gita, '*maamanusmara yuddhya cha*'. That means, 'think of Me and fight your battles.'

One meaning of '*maamanusmara*' is, 'My child, I am thinking of you. I have never put you aside from My lap. I have never discarded you from My sankalpa. I never moved My eyes from you. When you do bad things, I shrivel up and shut My eyes. I never let go of you. I cannot leave you and I will not leave you.'

This is how Bhagwan sits in our hriday and thinks of us; and here are we, who forget Him in the name of vyavhar!

Do Bhagwan's smaran. Your inner strength will be greatly enhanced, and so will your physical strength. Your life will become free of obstacles when you do His smaran. In fact, Bhagwan will give you ten times the shakti for doing your work.

Think of Bhagwan as you interact in the sansara. He will give you buddhi for improving your vyavhar. However, if you cut off your connection to the Power House, how will electricity come to your house? A manushya's hriday is like an electric bulb, and Bhagwan is the Power House. If you want electricity, remain connected to the source of electricity. Stay connected with Bhagwan when you do vyavhar. You are sure to be successful in your worldly interactions.

Question: - The Ishwara always wants the jeeva to stay before Him, but that does not happen. What is the reason?

Answer: - You have raised a very good point. Please always keep in mind that the Ishwara wants you to stay before Him at all times. He wants you to become His. He sees you as He sees His own Self; He knows you to be His Self, and recognizes you as His. There is no lacking from His side. The lacking is on our side that we are not able to do what He wants of us.

Question:- Is the Atma bound or is it Mukta?

Answer: - The Atma of a person who believes he is bound is bound, and the Atma of a person who believes he is Mukta is Mukta. The fact is that the Atma is neither baddha nor Mukta. It is our bhavna that is bandhan or Mukti. The Paramatma is separate from both. There is neither bandhan nor Mukti in the Atma.

And you are an ansha of the Paramatma, so there is neither bandhan nor Mukti in you. '*Maanee maanee bhandhan mein aayo*' – people are bound because they believe they are bound. There is no factual bandhan.

One man went to a Mahatma. 'Maharaj, I want Mukti,' he said.

The Mahatma asked, 'where is the bandhan, my brother? Where are you tied?'

The man said again, 'Maharaj, I am bound very badly.'

The Mahatma got up. He went to a nearby tree and caught it with both arms. He began to shout, 'the tree has caught hold of me! I am caught by the tree.'

The man went to him and said, 'Maharaj, the tree has not caught you. You are catching it.'

I will tell you something about Prempuriji Maharaj of Mumbai. He went to Adi Badri in search of Mukti. When he reached, he fasted for three days, but nothing happened. He thought, 'since I am not getting Mukti, I will throw myself into the Gangaji.'

As he thought this, a lady came there. She had a divine radiance. She asked, 'Swamiji, what do you desire?'

'I desire Mukti.'

'All right,' said the lady. 'I will come back in two or three hours. By then, please gather all your bandhans. I will strike one blow with the sword of Gnan and they will all be severed.'

Bondage does not actually exist. It is our mana that binds us to people, and this becomes a bandhan. All bandhan is from our side, not from any other. Therefore if you want to be free of bandhan, give up all thought of bandhan and Mukti, and

think about the Paramatma. You will see that both bandhan and Multi exist only in your imagination. They are not factual.

Yashoda Maiya tied Shri Krishna to the ukhal, and Nanda Baba set Him free. There was neither bandhan nor Mukti in Shri Krishna. Our swarup is the same.

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Question: - I have heard that when the drishti or the vritti becomes antarmukha, only then can a jeeva meet the Ishwara. How should we behave to make this possible in our jeevan?

Answer: - The drishti turns inwards only when our Beloved stays in our hriday. When Bhagwan sits in our hriday as the dearest of the dear, our eyes will turn to Him constantly. All of you know that the eyes go to the object of your prema, wherever he is sitting, and the eyes meet.

The one you love the most is seated in your hriday. Your antar-drishti will make Him the vishay again and again. You will keep looking at Him. If a person develops prema for Bhagwan seated within, the drishti will become antarmukha.

The second point is that the one who sees is no other; it is you. If you see the things of the outside world, it is called bahirdrishti. The straight point is, you should pray to Bhagwan, 'He Prabhu, give me antardrishti.' It is like asking somebody to give you what you don't have. So, if you don't have antardrishti, ask Bhagwan to give it to you. You should also keep the company of people who have antardrishti. Let your drishti mingle with theirs.

To look at Bhagwan seated in your hriday with great prema and undivided attention, is called antardrishti.

Question: - Why do people use bad words? Is it the effect of bad company, or a weakness of their own mana? How can this habit be controlled?

Answer: - My Guru, Swami Udiya Babaji Maharaj used to say that when we show respect to somebody, it isn't just respecting them; it is also cultivating a good habit. It is to teach ourselves to respect others.

You should show respect not only to elders, but also those who are younger. Address even a child respectfully. Stand up courteously when someone comes

into the room, even if he is younger than you. Speak smilingly, and offer him the best chair. When you start showing respect to even those who are your juniors, then you will automatically respect your elders.

Using bad words is a very bad habit. You must be alert about avoiding it. Do not let any bad word escape your lips even if the other person uses the foulest language. Your speech should be truthful, but if it is not appropriate to speak the truth, remain silent. Don't indulge in untruths. You should say what is dear to the person speak to, and say what will benefit them, and your speech should be brief. What you say should be appropriate to the occasion, and your speech should be restricted to what is necessary to say.

Make it a rule to think over what you wish to convey, before you speak. If anger prompts bad words, move away from there at the first stirring of anger and become silent. Don't talk until the anger has cooled. Think of the Ishwara who is also in the hriday of the other person and in your hriday as well, at the point where speech starts. When you speak offensively you give dukha to the Ishwara in your hriday and also in the hriday of the one you say it to. In a way, this is an insult to the Ishwara you are not aware of.

The Atma is one in all. Maya is also one in all. The five elements – the pancha bhoota – are the same in all. So, be very careful in your speech. In fact, you should keep some sugar candy in your pocket and put a lump in your mouth before speaking, to remind you that your speech should always be sweet!

If you feel anger rising, go and look at your face in a mirror. See how your face becomes distorted when you are angry. Another method to curb anger is to impose a penalty or punishment on yourself every time you allow anger to overcome you. You can fix a sum of money to be given to a charity, or go without something you like – tea or coffee for instance – for a day or a week. Or, you can walk to a Mandir to confess your lapse to Bhagwan and ask for forgiveness, and to save you from anger in future. However, make sure that the Mandir is not too close and easy to reach! Don't stay hungry, because hunger increases bile and that increases anger.

There is one more method you can use to give up your habit of using bad words. When you awaken in the morning, think of Bhagwan and mentally touch His feet. Pray, 'He Prabhu, let not a single bad word come out of my mouth today.' Then, mentally fall at Bhagwan's feet and take a vow that you will not utter even one bad word no matter what happens that day.

In the evening, look back to check whether you have kept your vow or broken it. If you have broken your vow, ask Bhagwan to forgive you, and protect you from this mistake the following day.

Bad words are called '*apashabda*', meaning, abusive, insulting language. It is also apashabda if you speak brashly to somebody in an overloud voice, or guffaw when you should smile. We must be very careful at every step in our jeevan. We should walk gently, quietly, not stamp our feet like a soldier from an invading army! When we sit, it should be gently, not with a thump that threatens to break the chair or bed. When you develop the habit of being careful in all your actions, sadgunas will come into your jeevan.

Question: - The ultimate fulfillment of existence for all jeevas is the hope for Mukti. Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj has said, on one occasion, 'instead of trying to obtain Mukti, we should negate Mukti'. Please do kripa on those of us who have limited buddhi, and explain what this means.

Answer: - These words are not said for the sansari people of limited understanding; they were said for the people who have done the vivek of the Atma-anatma, and know their Self to be the drashta, and know themselves to be Mukta-swarup. If these people say that Mukti is the swarup of the Atma, not something that needs to be attained with a great effort. What is said is proper for those this applies to; but not to all people. After all, the desire for Mukti is also a desire, and it is only in those who have obtained it. So, these words apply only to them.

For people who are immersed in the sansara and feel dukhi fifty times a day –

*Shokasthaanasahasraani, bhayasthaanashataani cha,
divase`-divase` moodhamaavishanti na panditam.*

Foolish people feel dukha a thousand times a day, and fear a hundred times a day about what will happen. This is a characteristic of fools. People of this category desire to be free of dukha and bhaya.

For his mature Satsangis Baba used to say that Mukti is our swarup; it is always with us. What is the need to desire something we already have? However, a mature understanding is needed to comprehend this.

You want Mukti from many things – from dukha, disease, death, your enemies, and the confusion of your mana. Now, judge for yourself whether you want Mukti or not! Mukti is not something that is obtained only after death. There are situations in this very jeevan, from which you want to be free. That is also called Mukti. For this, go a person who is wiser than you and place your problems before him with humility. Ask him for a solution. Then, follow his advice, and become Mukta.

If Bhagwan's bhakti has come into your hriday and you experience the sukha of bhakti – or, if you have cultivated vivek and feel sukha – well then, sukha is always aparoksha. It is experienced directly and personally. It is not imperceptible and unknown. In that case, why desire Mukti?

There is a sequence in this. 'This is not mine.' 'This is not the Satya.' The sequence is, 'nothing in this world is mine. I am not an object. I am the only Satya; nothing else is Satya.' When you begin to perceive yourself as Mukta because of using vichar-vivek, you will find that Mukti has always been yours.

Another sequence in this is that the Ishwara exists, and He is such a dense substance that He cannot be cut up. When you ponder deeply on the swarup of the Ishwara with shraddha, then, shraddha and vivek combined will become Bhakti. You will see that there is only anand in Bhagwan's Kingdom, nothing but anand!

Anand sindhu madhya tava baasa, binu jaanai toon marasi piyaasaa.

(You live in a sea of anand, but unless you know this you will die thirsty.)

You will experience such anand in Bhagwan's chintan and smaran that you will have no desire for Mukti. On the contrary, you will want to be bound to the Ishwara forever.

One bhakta says, 'I feel a thrill in my shareer. Anand fills my hriday. A shower of bhakti drenches me. A river of bhakti ripples, and bhakti flows in an unbroken stream. Sprays of bhakti spurt everywhere. My eyes are filled with tears of prema, and my throat is choked with prema.'

If we keep ourselves occupied in Bhagwan's seva in this manner, do His puja, bhajan and dhyana, with no time to waste in worldly activities, why will all the four kinds of Mukti come to our door and clamor for our attention? Why will they bother us?

The desire for Mukti vanishes when a person gets the anand of bhakti. A person who is filled with prema and anand has no wish for Mukti. He does not want to be free of Bhagwan; he wants a relationship to bind him to Bhagwan. When a person has Gnan about his swarup, he knows that Mukti is his swarup, so what is the need to want it?

Question: - I am a housewife. Several years ago I made a sankalpa, making Vishnu Bhagwan my Guru mentally. Is it necessary for me to make a Guru in this world now?

Answer: - When you have made Vishnu Bhagwan your Guru mentally, why does this question come to you now?

Since you have this doubt, ask somebody who you believe to be a knowledgeable person to guide you. Make your resolve firm, that Bhagwan is your Guru and will carry out the role of the Guru in your jeevan.

Question: - Is Bhagwan saguna or is He nirguna?

Answer: - Some people believe that Bhagwan is saguna and some believe that He is nirguna. It is not that all the people believe the one or the other. I will tell you a little about the difference between the nirguna and the saguna.

One man sits quietly with closed eyes. He neither talks nor walks, nor moves. There is a bhakta who has prema for him. He bathes and feeds the man, makes him drink water, and fans him. He does seva lovingly, but the man just sits there without speaking or moving. He just sits there with his eyes shut. He does not even give ashirvad. That man is called the nirguna Bhagwan.

There is another man. He wants to draw you close to him. He laughs at times and weeps at times. At times, he sings and dances, plays and enacts all kinds of emotions and actions. Sometimes he throws a lasso to catch you. One meaning of guna is a rope, you know! The name of that person is the saguna Bhagwan.

The nirguna Bhagwan does not throw a rope from His side to pull you to Him; you have to make an effort to go towards Him, after getting knowledge about His gunas, and accepting them as a fact. It is you who have to recognize His glory and majesty and go to Him, imagining sukha and anand with Him, and have prema for Him.

The saguna Bhagwan does all kinds of leelas. He catches your hand and pulls you towards Himself. When He sees your efforts to reach Him are being hindered in some way, He removes the obstacles.

Now, you have to see for yourself whether you prefer a nirguna Bhagwan or a saguna Bhagwan. Each individual has his own inclination, you know. There are some people who become suspicious of you ask them to give you prema. And, there are people who say, 'He desires nothing, but if I get prema it will be for Him and no other.'

A person who desires nothing is great, He is a tyagi. Prema should be for such a person. Some people like a person who remains silent and grave, and some people like a person who dances, sings, laughs, and weeps. See your own inclination – where does it take you? To the one seated in dhyana, or the one who

laughs and plays? Both are forms of Bhagwan; there is no doubt about that! He is equally in the grave and the light-hearted.

Question: - Is a Brahmagnani bound by any individual, Mata, Pantha, Sampradaya, place, time etc?

Answer: - There is no bandhan for a Brahmagnani, but if he wants to, he is free to accept and live according to any Pantha or Sampradaya. Nobody has the right to stop him.

A tree-guard is needed to protect a sapling from being eaten by some goat or cow, but when it grows into a tree, the fencing has to be removed to allow it to grow into a big tree. Then, people sit under it and enjoy the shade. In the same way, the different Sects and Sampradayas protect people from becoming prey to wrong influences, not to bind them. They help the person to become spiritually elevated and get Mukti.

Question: - A Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha is completely independent. What are the evident and essential characteristics of such a person?

Answer: - A Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha is above and beyond characteristics. The lakshan belong to ordinary people. A Tattvagnani's only lakshan is that he remains a Tattvagnani.

A lakshan is according to the lakshya – the goal. It is not a word of vyakaran formed by a sutra. The lakshan of a Tattvagnani's swarup in Vedanta is not based on any lakshan. A Tattvagnani is free to laugh, sing, speak, stay naked, or live like a Badshah; and this is his lakshan! There is nobody who can interfere with his freedom to do what he likes or stop him from doing what he wants.

Question: - Is a Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha completely free of lokeshana – meaning, worldly power?

Answer: - Look, Mukti and bandhan are for worldly people. They are of no consequence for a Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha. Why will he have lokeshana of any kind? He has understood that the people are not separate from him. The Atma of all is one.

A person has a desire for something that is separate, which he wants to get. Why will anyone desire that which is not separate from him? The Raja is getting the bhoga of his Kingdom – I am his Atma. I get the sukha he is getting. Indra is getting the bhoga of Swarga – I am Indra's Atma. I am getting the sukha of Indra's bhoga. What need have I to become Indra? All the sons in the world are my sons. I am the Atma of all. People get the sukha of having a son and I also have the sukha they have.

A person who is established in his swarup in this manner has no cause to have any aishana – any of the common desires – lokeshana, vitteshana (desire for wealth), bhogeshana (desire for bhoga), or putreshana (desire for a son). If he wants, he can see Rama in his mana and do His bhakti, see Krishna and do His bhakti, see Shiva and do His bhakti. Or else, he can sit peacefully if that is his wish. For him, the whole creation is his swarup. He is filled with such anand that it is not proper to raise the question of aishana as far as a Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha is concerned.

Had any desire risen in a Jeevanmukta Mahapurusha at any time, for the purpose of his enlightenment, it was fulfilled. There is no point in thinking now, whether any desire remains.

What is the difference between jeevan-satta, jeevan-bodha and a sukhi jeevan? Look; jeevan-satta is the true anand. Without bodha there is neither satta nor anand. If there is awareness, everything is all right.....everything is intermingled. And, if there is no awareness, there is nothing! It is bodha that we are with Bhagwan, and it is bodha that we are separated from Him.

When the gopis had bodha that they were separated from Bhagwan they began to weep. When they had bodha that He is with them, they began to smile. It is the mana that has the feeling of sanyoga-viyoga.

Whatever the cause of the sukha-dukha in this sansara – whether it is because of getting wealth, getting a son, or power, glory, etc – whenever you feel sukha-dukha, it is felt in the mana. Nobody can get sukha-dukha unless it is experienced in the mana. The son is outside, the house is outside, the position of power is outside. And where is sukha? Sukha is within.

Our mana is the place of all the sukha-dukha in this world. Make your mana dukha-proof, and stay always in sukha. It is not that you will feel sukhi when you get any particular object. Sukha is not red, yellow or black! Do you know the length, weight or age of sukha and dukha? Sukha-dukha have no form, no color, no weight, and no age. Sukha is there as long as you feel sukhi, and you are dukhi for as long as you experience dukha. Why do you bother about sukha-dukha? Bother about your experience. Whenever you want sukha, desire the sukha of meeting Bhagwan. And if you ever want dukha, think of the dukha of being separated from Him, and remain in a happy, carefree state of mind.

Actually, the world is not changing; it is your perceptions that keep changing. You say, ‘I will be sukhi when I obtain this particular object.’

There was a Seth in Rajasthan He saw a girl and decided that she should become his wife. He did not ask the girl or her father. He began to say, ‘I will die if I don’t marry this girl.’

When the girl heard this, she said, ‘if you want to die tomorrow you may as well die today! I won’t even spit on you!’

People begin to desire things with their mana and become dukhi if they don’t get it.

So, what we have to do is to discipline our mana and mould it. Just as we go to a doctor when the shareer is ill, we should go to Satsang to treat the illness of the mana, and discipline it so that it stays healthy. If you come to me and say, ‘my mana is dukhi for this object’, I will tell you, ‘let the object remain where it is. Make your mana fit.’ Our department is to make the mana fit.

I don't know about five thousand years ago, or five minutes ago. Just yesterday somebody was telling me that twenty or twenty five years from now, we won't get diesel, so we should start looking for alternatives. Another gentleman told me that some researcher has said that the Himalaya will become the sea after fifty million years. We should think about how to save the Himalaya. All this is confusion of the mana. So, attach the mana to Bhagwan in the present moment. Bhagwan is the swarup of Paramananda. Smile at the thought of meeting Him, and feel happy. And, weep a little, Even a few tears give great shanti.

A few days before becoming a Sanyasi I had gone to see a cinema. It was called 'Rama Rajya' – or perhaps, 'Bharat Milap'. It showed Ramachandra lamenting at being parted from Janakiji. The acting was very good. Tears flowed from the eyes of Rama. His breathing was labored, and his stomach was shrunk. His hand was kept on his chest in acute distress. I became so involved in the scene that I also wept in distress. When we came out of the theatre I said, 'that was a very enjoyable experience.' Came out after weeping, and experienced anand!

Thus, a manushya needs to restrain his mana. This is adhyatma vidya. This is Bhagwan's bhakti. It is Vedanta that we develop the ability to keep our mana at peace amidst the coming and going of things, being parted or bereft of things, and in every situation, taking the support of Bhagwan. There is no other support for our mana except Bhagwan. And, if you can stay sukhi and shanta without any support you have no need to come or go anywhere. You can sit peacefully in your house.

If we want to keep our mana fit we should attach it to Bhagwan, or else we should keep the company of people whose mana is always at peace. All the dukha in our jeevan is because of keeping the wrong kind of company. It is because of this that we are dependent and enslaved in sukha as well as in dukha. So we should make an effort to mould our mana properly.

For achieving this we have to restrain our mana, and keep our indriyas and jeevan within the boundaries of the Dharma Shastras. It is not that we allow ourselves to eat, drink, say or do whatever we feel like.

We should have sadbhava for all. No thought of hurting or harming anybody should come into our mana. Everything we do should first be considered carefully to make sure it is right and proper to do. There should be no pride or vanity; these are the greatest causes of a manushya's downfall. If your character is pavitra you will always be sukhi.

Two things are necessary for being sukhi at all times. One is to have no insistence about having anything with you always. Let things come and let them go, and keep your mana pavitra. Then, you will always be sukhi and shanta. The fact is, we seek nothing else in the world – neither a Guru, nor wealth, nor society. What we actually seek is sukha.

And how can we get sukha?

We will get sukha by not depending on external objects. The more we disregard the things of the outside world, the more sukhi we will be.

Question: - Have you seen Bhagwan? If so, what is He like?

Answer: - I have seen Bhagwan, and He is a little like you! I have no hesitation in saying that I have seen Bhagwan, but that He is like you.....have a good look at yourself!

The fact is our Bhagwan doesn't stay in the seventh heaven; He is the matter of which this creation is made. He is everything. He pervades everything, and the one who abides in the hriday of all is not other than Him.

If you recognize yourself, recognize what you are, you will see that just as every lamp is a flame, every ripple is water, and every breath is air, this entire creation is filled with Bhagwan. He is in your hriday, in your buddhi, and in your jeevan in a very charming form. Savor this sweetness, and see yourself in His Paramananda swarup.

Question: - How can the dhyana and masti of our Beloved Shyamsundar come into our jeevan?

Answer: - Give up the dhyana and connection of other people and things. Give up gossip and idle chit-chat, and wanting the admiration of society. When you think exclusively about Bhagwan, anand and masti will come into you during that period of time.

When you stop thinking about others you will see that an ocean that is the Paramananda-swarup anand is heaving in your hriday. Then, only Bhagwan will reign supreme in your hriday. All the leelas and glory will be His.

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Question: - Please do kripa and tell me how I can get the darshan of my Beloved Shri Krishna.

Answer: - For this, the first thing is that you want the darshan of only Shri Krishna, and no other. Then, you will get His darshan.

The second thing is that you should start to run with the desire of getting Shri Krishna's darshan, and you will get His darshan. However, you have to go on running until He gives you darshan.

If you sit for Shri Krishna's darshan, don't get up until you get His darshan.

If you lie down for His darshan, continue to lie until you get His darshan.

The firmness of your resolve will be tested by this method. Firmness of resolve is very important in Bhakti. You desire other things – to see Switzerland, to see Kashmir, and the novelties of this world; and you also want to see Shri Krishna! That is not possible. Shri Krishna meets His bhaktas in solitude, when just the two of them are alone.

And, when are the two of them alone?

It is not just the aloneness of the shareer; it is also the aloneness of the mana. When the mana is free of all other longings except Shri Krishna, and it calls out 'Krishna.....Krishna!' then, Shri Krishna gives you darshan.

For this, it is essential that you have vishvas for the people who have had Shri Krishna's darshan. If you think that there is nobody in this world who has got Shri Krishna's darshan in this Yuga, you will not feel confident about getting His darshan. There must be vishvas in your mana that Shri Krishna's darshan can be obtained even in present times, and you should have vishvas for the Sants who have had His darshan.

Another point to be noted here is that you want Shri Krishna's darshan, but how badly do you want it? Please weigh your prema and see how much prema you have for Shri Krishna.

There was a Mahatma who went to Mumbai. One Seth told him, 'Maharaj, please give me the darshan of Shri Krishna.'

The Mahatma told him, 'look, my brother, I have given my whole life to get Shri Krishna's darshan. You ask me to give you His darshan. Exchange the fruit of your life's work for mine! You want that you should keep the fruits of your life's work and get Shri Krishna's darshan for free – that is not possible.'

Weigh your prema with honesty and see whether your prema for Shri Krishna is greater than your prema for anything in this world or not. Do you love your wealth, good name, family, shareer, associates, etc more, or do you love Bhagwan more? Don't deceive yourself.

In prema for Bhagwan there is a condition attached – your prema for Bhagwan has to be more than your prema for anything or anyone else. You have prema for your son, wealth, shareer, spouse, etc. Shri Vallabhacharyaji Maharaj says, '*sarvatoadhika*' – more than anything else. Prema for Bhagwan must be more than the prema for all other things.

The first thing is that you must have knowledge about Bhagwan's greatness, His glory, His Majesty, power and compassion. Bhagwan is not some Raja, aristocrat, or millionaire. It is Bhagwan's greatness that glimmers as this whole world, as one lifetime. You should have Gnan about this.

The next thing is that your prema should be so solid that nothing can break it. It is not right when people pray, 'He Bhagwan, please send this for me,' and if their wish is not fulfilled, the prema is forgotten!

There was a gentleman who did Ganeshji's puja everyday with the hope of having his wishes fulfilled. Six months passed but nothing happened. This made him very angry with Ganeshji. He picked up Ganeshji's murti and put it up on a niche in the

wall. 'I won't do Your puja anymore,' he told the murti. 'I will worship Your father!'

He began to do Shivaji's puja. He offered incense to Shivaji. The smoke went upward to Ganeshji's murti. The Seth got up and stuffed cotton-wool in Ganeshji's nose. 'You didn't give me anything – why are You inhaling my incense?'

Ganeshji couldn't help smiling. 'My brother, until now you believed Me to be a stone idol. Today you believe Me to be a living power!'

Just examine yourself and see how solid your prema for Bhagwan is. Is it that you don't believe in His kripa if He doesn't do what you want, and your prema becomes weak? Sometimes, people tell me, 'Maharaj, I have done puja for so many years, but nothing has happened.' My brother, you should also think of how many years you didn't do puja, or even remember Bhagwan!

Very well; now see another point about the greatest prema being for Bhagwan. Tears come into your eyes. For whom do they come? Do they come for wealth, for the sansara, for the shareer or those related to the shareer? Or, do they come for your good name? It is very easy to call Bhagwan 'pyaare', but you should measure yourself and remove the weaknesses that you find, and strengthen your prema for Bhagwan. To have prema for Bhagwan, to give your pyara to Him, is not so easy!

If Bhagwan is your pyara, there is a very important point you must keep in mind. The point is, if Bhagwan is your pyara and He is not giving darshan to you, how do you feel about it? If Bhagwan is indeed the dearest of the dear, and He faces some inconvenience in giving His darshan to you, why do you want to force Him to give you darshan? If it is convenient, He will give darshan; if not, He won't!

The gopis told Uddhavaji, 'Uddhavaji, we will get great anand if Shri Krishna comes to Vraja, but if His coming here causes the slightest disturbance in His plans, we would rather He didn't come.' A premi is one who feels sukhi in the sukha of the loved one, and dukhi in his dukha.

Doshe`na kshayitaam gune`na gunitaam.

The nature of prema is that it does not reduce when you see doshas in the loved one. In fact, it increases with the thought, 'my beloved needs me at this time.' The prema encompasses the loved one, gathers him to its hriday, and cherishes him. Prema does not wane when defects are seen. Nor does it increase when gunas are seen, because gunas and doshas are both seen at times.

You see a person give five rupees to someone and think, 'he is a very generous man.' You see the guna and prema rises. Then you see him refuse to give even ten paisa to someone and think, 'what a mean person this is! And you prema decreases. Real prema is not dependent on gunas and doshas, or whether you get his darshan or not.

Aashlishya maam paadarataam.

'He may embrace me and hold me close, or He may grind me in dust, or He may give me darshan and pierce my hriday – let Him do whatever He likes; He is the Swami of my prana.'

The purport is that we should get sukha in whatever Bhagwan chooses for us, however He wants to keep us – let us get sukha is that, which He chooses.

Somebody told a Sant, 'Maharaj, so many days have passed but I have not got Bhagwan's darshan.'

The Mahatma smiled. 'Yes, but tell me, what will you do after you get Bhagwan's darshan? After all, how long will He give you darshan – five minutes or five hours? After that, He will become antardhyana again. Then, what will you do?'

'I will do bhajan after that,' said the man.

'Very well', said the Mahatma. 'Since you will do bhajan after He gives you His darshan, why don't you do bhajan now? Start straight away! Do bhajan now, the way you will after you get His darshan.'

You trust your eyes when Bhagwan gives you darshan, that is all right; but you don't trust the Shastras, and the Mahatmas, and even Bhagwan's statements! Bhagwan says, 'I meet My bhaktas. I give darshan to them.' The Shastras describe

Bhagwan's Avatars. Mahatmas have told us in many ways that Bhagwan has, Himself, commanded that we should have vishvas for what His Sants tell us, not on our own eyes which mislead us so often.

If you have prema for Bhagwan don't let the pride of having prema come into you. Don't talk about your prema. Nurture it within. Let it grow, so that it encompasses Bhagwan and He manifests in your hriday, whether He manifests outside or not! There is great shakti in prema. It can bring Bhagwan to you or take you to Him. Prema has the shakti to make the nirguna the saguna.

If you have prema for Bhagwan let go of the insistence about how you can get His darshan; you are getting His darshan. The one for whom you have prema stays in your hriday. He laughs and weeps, and talks to you. Prema is not connected to the shareer; it is connected to the hriday.

In worldly prema the shareer and indriyas are needed for two people to unite, but this is not the case in divine prema. When your jeevan is *haardika* – meaning, when it is of the hriday – you live in the world of the hriday, the world of prema. Bhagwan is also in your hriday, in your prema. He does not go away for even a moment. 'Beloved.....Beloved.....Beloved!'

Somebody asked a Mahatma, 'how will Bhagwan meet me? For how long does He stay in the mana?' Maybe not for twenty four hours, but for twelve hours? Maybe not for twelve hours, but one hour? Just see how long Bhagwan stays in your hriday at a time. This will help you to measure the strength of your wish to meet Bhagwan.

You may ask, 'which japa should I do to get Bhagwan?' Look; there is no need to use magic spells for captivating your own husband. One Shrimatiji came to me and said, 'Maharaj, please tell me of a mantra by which my husband comes under my control.' I told her, 'Deviji, I know a mantra by which you will come under your husband's control. I don't know any mantra by which you will gain control over him. You want his mana to change; why don't you want that your mana should change?'

No spells can be used if you want to walk on the path to Bhagwan. No mantra-tantra is of any use. Prema is needed for Bhagwan to manifest. For the kama, krodha and lobha in your hriday to be removed, and bhakti for Bhagwan to grow, you should do japa of the mantra given by your Guru. There is no need to change your Guru, and there is no need to change the mantra given by him. The shakti in all the mantras is one.

People say, 'give up this mantra, and do the japa of that mantra.' Such people want to cheat you. They want you to become their disciple.

The shakti in all the mantras is one, and shakti in all forms is one – whether it is Bhagwan's Brahma-roop, Vishnu-roop, or Shiva-roop. The shakti in the different rules of the different pujas is one.

Don't change your Guru, or your mantra, or your Ishta. Do the sadhana you are doing with all your heart, with shraddha and vishvas, with a firm resolve and with prema. Do it to please Bhagwan. You will see, you will get Bhagwan's darshan.

Question: - Please tell me something about Bhagwan's naam, roop and guna.

Answer: - According to the descriptions in the Vedas, Bhagwan's naam comes before His roop. They should actually come together, but the mantras of the Vedas give the naam first. The *naada* – sound – comes first, and then the *bindu* – form – because form is created from sound.

To get the sakshatkara of the oneness of the Atma and the Brahman the praman (proof) is the Mahavakya. In the same way, the praman is used for removing agnan, and the naam removes abhiman.

Naam means *namana* – to bow down. '*Namayati bhakttam vaa bhagavantam vaa iti naama*' – that which makes Bhagwan bend and remove the abhiman in the hriday of the bhakta, is the naam.

The naam is between the bhakta and Bhagwan. It removes Bhagwan's quality of being invisible, and it removes the bhakta's abhiman. Bhagwan's naam works

both ways. It contains the adhibhoota (pertaining to gross matter), the adhidaiva (pertaining to the divine) as well as the adhyatmik (pertaining to the metaphysical).

To explain this takes a little time.

The three things in Bhagwan's name are such that they connect our vani, drishti and mana to Bhagwan. For example, when I say 'r', it is the Devta that connects my vani to Bhagwan. When I say 'aa' it is the Devta that connects my drishti to Bhagwan, and when I say 'm', it is the Devta that connects my mana to Bhagwan.

When I say 'Rama', three Devtas rush to help me. When I say 'r' all my paapa-taapa are burnt to cinders. When I utter 'aa' Aditya Devta stills the restlessness of my eyes and makes them remain steadily on Bhagwan. When I say 'm' Chandrama Devta – who is the Devta of the mana – is pleased, and connects my mana to Bhagwan.

I am telling you about something that is not very well known. The result of chanting Bhagwan's naam is that our vani and drishti meaning, our karmendriya and gnanendriya, and our mana – which is the cause of the activity of our speech and eyes, are, all three, carried by Bhagwan's naam to Him. That means Bhagwan is in the mana.

The Devta who gives ahlad stays in the mana. The Devta who gives Gnan stays in the drishti, and the Devta who gives Dharma stays in the vani.

Vak – meaning speech – is karma. Karma gives Dharma, which removes the restlessness of the drishti and gives illumination. Illumination removes the darkness of agnan, and we get Gnan. Vani removes the paapa that obstructs spiritual progress. Drishti removes the darkness of ignorance, and the mana removes the dukha in it.

In this way, all the names of Bhagwan have a shakti that attaches our hriday to Bhagwan.

Uttering 'r' connects us to the Sat. Uttering 'aa' connects us to the Chit, and uttering 'm' connects us to Anand. (Sat+Chit+Anand = Sacchidananda, the

Brahman). So, when we begin to do japa of Bhagwan's naam, our suffering, our agnan, and our dukha are all destroyed; and we become attached to Bhagwan. Therefore, when Bhagwan does kripa on us, we get Satsang.

The result of doing Satsang is that we develop a propensity for Bhagwan's naam. And, the greatness of His naam is such that naam and Rama – His name and His form – don't remain two; they become one. When they are not two, how will Bhagwan tell us about the greatness of the naam?

Bhagwan's greatness is infinite, so the greatness of the naam is also infinite. If it was possible to find where the greatness of Bhagwan ends, it would be possible to say where the greatness of the naam ends. So, even if Bhagwan wanted to tell us where the naam's mahima ends, or where His own mahima ends, He can't! It is not that Bhagwan becomes agnani because of this inability; He would be called an agnani if there was an end to His mahima and He did not know about it! Since His mahima and the mahima of His naam is endless, it is not possible for anybody – not even Bhagwan – to speak about it. There are so many gunas in the naam that I cannot describe them for you.

Even an ordinary sound has so many gunas that great things are achieved by sound. One day I went to somebody's house and saw a toy bus with an ariel. I asked the father of the boy whose bus it was, about it. He said, 'Look, Swamiji.' Then he said 'Go!' and the bus began to go forward. He said 'Stop!' and the bus stopped. Thus, sound has the power to make a stationary object move, and a moving object stop moving.

In the descriptions related to bhakti, when Shri Krishna played His flute the creepers began to smile, the trees oozed nectar and the cows stood still as though transfixed! The shakti of sound is extraordinary. Sound cannot be seen, but it pervades all space. These days, cordless telephones have become very popular. There is no cord that connects it to the mains, but it rings, and people talk into it, like an ordinary phone. That means, sound is spread everywhere in the house. We can hear it when our receiver absorbs it.

Shabda – sound – has great mahima. When Bhagwan's naam comes to the mouth of a manushya – whoever it may be, wherever he may be, whenever it may be – it means he has obtained kalyan. He has received a great good fortune. The naam gives him param kalyan. The only thing is, it must be habitual. I will give you an example of the excellent habit of some people who have taken Bhagwan's naam continuously.

Bhedaghat is a place close to Jabalpur, on the bank of the Narmada. Shri Chaitanyagiriji Maharaj passed by when he was returning to the Ashram after having a bath in the Narmada. He saw a young Sadhu lying on the ground. He told the Sadhu, 'Oh Mahatma! Look, it is past nine o'clock, and you are still sleeping lazily? Get up and do bhajan.'

The Sadhu beckoned Shri Chaitanyagiriji, indicating he come close. He extended his hand. 'Put your ear to my hand,' he said. Shri Chaitanyagiriji did so. The Sadhu's hand reverberated with 'Rama...Rama....Rama'. The Sadhu told him to put his ear to his head. The name of Rama could be heard there as well. He told Shri Chaitanyagiriji to put his ear to the chest, and Shri Chaitanyagiriji heard Rama-naam coming from the Sadhu's chest. Then the Sadhu pointed to his feet, and Shri Chaitanyagiriji heard the Sadhu's feet resonate with Rama-naam. The name of Rama had pervaded every cell of the Sadhu's shareer! This Mahatma gave up his shareer just recently. Phulchor Baba of Vrindavan often went to Jabalpur with me to meet him.

This, when a person has an ingrained practice of taking Bhagwan's name constantly, the naam springs forth from every follicle of his shareer. It is not proper to talk at length, but when a person forms the habit of taking Bhagwan's name continuously, he develops such prema for it that if anybody asks him, 'have you had Bhagwan's darshan?' he says, 'is the naam not enough, that I should want Bhagwan's roop – His darshan – in exchange? This is not like giving money to buy sweetmeats to eat! Bhagwan's naam is in no way less than His roop. It is a very great thing, and its mahima is equally great.'

Regarding Bhagwan's roop, His darshan is obtained either during an Avatar, or when He manifests exclusively for a bhakta. Apart from this, darshan is obtained in dhyana or in bhajan.

It is indisputable that the darshan seen in the mana can also be seen outside, because it is the mana that sees. The mana sees with the external eyes or with the inner eyes. The manifestation of Bhagwan's roop depends on Bhagwan's wish. When He is pleased with someone, He appears before them.

Now, regarding dhyana, if we do dhyana of the roop, Bhagwan is very beautiful! Only beauty! Beauty! Beauty!

People bring a beautiful picture of Bhagwan and put it up in their home. 'Our Bhagwan is very beautiful,' they say. Some days later the picture is changed. It is replaced by a picture that is even more beautiful, because it is art, and there is always improvement in art. Therefore, it is essential that mahatmya-gnan accompanied Bhagwan's beauty.

The one whose picture it is – who is He? What is He like? What is His beauty, sweetness, and virtues like? What is His mahima? What is His shakti like? What aishwarya does He have? You should know about these things. It is small children who become attached to a beautiful picture.

When Bhagwan manifests in an Avatar, the circumstances are totally different. At that time, even Rishi-Munis, Gnanis and dhyanis are entranced by Him. When we see a picture of Bhagwan, however, it is essential for us to know about His greatness, and know whose picture it is. We should know that this is the picture of the one who feeds and nourishes the whole world with His sankalpa.

Who is He? He is the one whose frown causes the Dissolution of the world. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are created with His sankalpa. Chintan is done of Bhagwan's aishwarya as well as His beauty – meaning, the beauty of Bhagwan's shabda.

How beautiful Bhagwan's speech is! How much sweetness there is in His vani, and how beneficial it is, how dear! There is such depth of meaning in it!

The chintan of His touch, of His delicate shareer, of its fragrance, and of His magnanimous nature should be done. Do chintan of His sweetness, and His loveliness. Imagine you get a glimpse of His pitambar and the girdle round His waist, and hear the tinkle of His anklets. The Shrimad Bhagwat has wonderful descriptions of all these.

Vismaapanam svasya cha saubhagarddhe`h.

When Bhagwan sees His own roop in a mirror he is wonderstruck! ‘Oh! I am so beautiful!’

Ornaments don’t enhance Bhagwan’s beauty; the beauty of the ornaments is enhanced when they are put on Bhagwan’s beautiful shareer. Where on this earth will He see such sublime beauty? And, where does He have the time to admire it?!

If some day, somewhere, the drishti falls on His beauty – Oh! Wonder! Wonder! Wonder! Whoever sees this beauty is wonderstruck!

It is described that Shri Krishna saw Himself in a mirror one day. He saw a beauty that was stunning. He wondered, ‘who is this man? His beauty is fantastic! He forgot Himself and began to think of the beauty reflected in the mirror. He became entranced by His own beauty! Then, He thought, ‘had I been Radha I would have married this man. I wonder who he is. Such beauty! *Aham api paribhokttum kaamaye`* – this is a beauty that cannot be surpassed.’

I will tell you of an episode. Shri Krishna wanted to give darshan to a bhakta. When He came into the atmosphere the whole place was filled with such a divine fragrance that all five indriyas of the bhakta went into his nose. The eyes, ears, tongue and sense of touch all combined with his sense of smell. Nothing can be more captivating than this!

Just then, the sound of Shri Krishna’s flute was heard, and all the indriyas went into the ears of the bhakta. They wanted to just go on listening to this divine sound. The tinkling of Bhagwan’s anklets was heard. The indriyas settled firmly in

the ears. There was a variety of sounds – the flute, the anklets and Bhagwan's voice.

The Bhagwan manifested, and put His hand on the bhakta's shoulder. Oh my friend, that touch! That fragrance of Bhagwan's shareer, that sound of His voice!

Just then, Bhagwan shone, and the bhakta's eyes opened. When he saw the sweetness of Bhagwan's roop, all the indriyas rushed into his eyes. The individuality of the indriyas dissolved into the mana and came into the eyes, and began to gaze at Shri Krishna.

Then Bhagwan gave prasad. The rasa of His prasad was such that all the rasas of the world become insipid in comparison.

And here are we, the common people, who wander about in the paltry sense objects. If a person gets some minor accomplishment he gets filled with abhiman. A person gets a little siddhi of the vani, or the power of sankalpa, or the ability to attract some external objects, but these siddhis of the indriyas are mostly sensual, and give only sensual sukha. They are insignificant.

The main thing is the removing of the curtain that is between us and Bhagwan. Once this screen is removed we can absorb Bhagwan's beautiful voice, His tenderness, sweetness, and fragrance – not with our indriyas, but with the mana; and our Atma automatically merges into Him. Thus, Bhagwan's naam, roop, and gunas are indescribable.

We see that even the Sanakadis – the four ever-young sons of Brahmaji – have to make some effort to meet Bhagwan. If by chance, Bhagwan calls them to Him, it is to give a glimpse of His compassion, His kripa, and His wonderful qualities. Bhagwan gives Mukti to the baddha (bound) and bandhan to the Mukta. His aishwarya is beyond imagination.

You know about Vaikunth, of its great aishwarya and its sweetness. It is Bhagwan who sits in the chitta of the Sanakadis as well as in the chitta of His gatekeepers, Jay and Vijay. Jay-Vijay stopped the Sanakadis from going into Bhagwan's

chamber because He was sleeping. They gave a shaap to Jay and Vijay. Jay and Vijay were banished from Vaikunth. They were made to fall.

Bhagwan gave unimaginable wealth to Jay-Vijay. Imagine some prisoner being released from jail and given enormous wealth! When Bhagwan banishes anybody from Vaikunth the person retains Bhagwan's chintan. Jay-Vijay's sanskara did not leave them – it flashed intermittently. The feeling of being a Devta alternated with the feeling of being an Asura. This tussle is ever-present. Bhagwan bound these two Mukta servants of His and made the baddha free.

See Bhagwan's svabhava. See His aishwarya – the aishwarya that gives a vulture His own realm to live in! Bhagwan Rama sent Jatayu to His own palace in Vaikunth, saying, 'stay here henceforth.' And, He sent Marich to a realm that even great Rishi-Munis obtain with great difficulty.

And what about Kubja? Please give your attention to Bhagwan's gunas. People who cast aspersions go on doing so because they don't do chintan of the shanta with a positive attitude. Chintan that is favorable is called manan, and chintan that is favorable as well as negative is called tarka-vitarka.

Think of Kubja. Her caste was lowly and she was a hunchback. Her karma was lowly – she served Kansa. Did she know Bhagwan? Was she aware that He had come into her city? Everyone who saw Krishna was filled with anand, but Kubja passed by unthinkingly, carrying unguents for Kansa's seva. She did not even look at Shri Krishna! This was what Kubja was like.

Shri Krishna called out to her, 'O Sundari!'

Who is it, who sees the beauty of Kubja's Atma? Not only is He bhakta-vatsal, He is also supremely magnanimous!

'O Sundari!' was heard again. Kubja ignored it, because she knew how ugly her shareer was. Nobody would call her a beautiful woman. Bhagwan had to call out a third time before Kubja realized He was addressing her. She looked at Him and said, 'Sundar!'

What sadhan-bhajan did Kubja have? This is called Bhagwan!

To give five rupees to somebody is not a great guna. Bhagwan first called someone who had no qualification whatsoever for His kripa. He filled her ears with His voice. Then He inspired her to look at Him, and her eyes met His. Then He asked, 'I know that the unguents you are carrying are for Kansa, but will you give them to Me instead?' He took the oils, creams, etc and applied them to His own shareer. That very moment Kubja's shareer became straight; the hunch disappeared. Krishna attached her mana to His. The path of Kubja's life changed forever. She did not go to Kansa's palace, she went back to her own house and sat there waiting, hoping that Bhagwan would come one day. And, Bhagwan came!

This is called Bhagwan, and this is Bhagwan's guna. He showers kripa, vatsalya, and affection on people who have great sadhan, nisadhan, and kusadhan!

Goswamiji sang –

*Gayee maarana pootanaa, kucha kaala-koota lagaaya,
maatuu kee gati deenhi taahi, kripalu yaadava raaya.*

Prabhu is so compassionate that He gave Putana – who wanted to feed Him poison – the gati of His mother.

Kubja was turned completely towards the outer world. She was inferior by caste, shareer and feelings, inclined to serve a lowly person like Kansa. Even to such a person Bhagwan showered His compassion and His kripa.

When we do chintan of Bhagwan's gunas, smaran of His naam, investigation of His divine beauty and innate sweetness, we forget the prapanch.

Sants have told us repeatedly that the true purpose of a jeeva is to forget the prapanch and acquire prema for Bhagwan. And yet, we remain engrossed in the prapanch! We believe the harm of the outer world to be our harm, and outer benefit to be our benefit. Put aside both the harm and the benefit you attach so much importance to, and do the smaran-chintan of Bhagwan's naam, roop, and gunas.

The greatest good of a manushya, and the greatest harm, is to forget Bhagwan's naam, roop and gunas! Therefore, attach your mana to doing Bhagwan's seva. Let your tongue chant His name and talk about His gunas and leelas. Let you mana do chintan about His kripa, vatsalya, etc. In this, is the success and fulfillment of a manushya's jeevan.

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23. 3. 1983.

Question: - Does kartavya remain after a person attains Gnan?

Answer: - There was a Mahatma who lived in Kashi. My friend, 'Chakraji' and I went to meet him. I asked the Mahatma, 'do you call yourself Bhagwan?'

'Yes,' he said.

Then I asked, 'you are Bhagwan, and we have got your darshan. We have met you. Now do we have any kartavya left or not?'

'Yes, you still have kartavya.'

'What?' I asked.

He said, 'it is true that you have got my darshan, but you have not got prema for me yet. Now, after getting my darshan it is your kartavya to get prema for me. Now, do my prema and fulfill the kartavya you still have to do.'

In the same way after getting Gnan about Bhagwan we have the kartavya of getting prema for Him.

About fifty years ago I had asked a Mahatma, 'what happens after meeting Bhagwan?'

'Look,' he said, 'you go up to Bhagwan's door. Knock on His door. Bhagwan opens it and takes you in. What does it matter how He behaves, once you are inside His house? He may make you sit on a throne, strip you naked, do your puja, or beat you! How does that concern you? Your purpose is to reach Him. When you reach His palace He will do whatever He wants.'

The meaning of this is that our endeavor should be to obtain Gnan, not think about any kartavya-akartavya that may follow.

The Vedantis have different opinions about this. One group of Vedantis say that there is no kartavya left for a person who has obtained Tattvagnan. There is

another group, of Vidyaranya Swami and others, who lived in the fourteenth century, long before Goswami Tulsidasji. This group says that jignasus are of two kinds. One kind do Bhagwan's bhakti first and then they get Gnan. The other kind become Gnani without doing Bhagwan's bhakti.

Those who become Gnani without doing bhakti have a residue of vasanas, and their mana also remains alive. They are constantly troubled by their mana and their vasanas. That is why this group needs to develop prema for Bhagwan and get the extraordinary sukha of Jeevanmukti. They should go on recalling an Ishta-akara vritti with prema. This reduces vasanas, and even the mana is destroyed.

Even after you get Gnan you should not forget the knowledge you have attained, that Gnan should be protected.

- (i) 'Gnan-raksha' – the tapasya in your jeevan should continue.
- (ii) 'Tapasya' – do not get involved in quarrels, disputes and arguments.
- (iii) 'Absence of vada-vivada' – there should be no anubhav of dukha.
- (iv) 'Dukha-nivritti' – dukha should be removed and you jeevan should be sukhi.
- (v) 'Obtaining Paramananda' – you should be alert about these five purposes.

For example, when you experience the dukha of hunger, you eat some food, and when you feel unwell you take some medicine. In the same way when some vasana comes into your mana and causes agitation, you should get the proper treatment for it.

However, if your jeevan is poorna and sukhi, and you are getting the anubhav of Paramananda, how will the Veda, Shashtra, or Acharya impose any rules or prohibitions? But, you have to be alert that your jeevan remains filled with Bhagwan.

Actually, the principle is that for a Satpurusha who is fully content with the amrita of Gnan, is fulfilled in every way, and has nishtha in the Brahman, there is no kartavya left to be done. If he feels that he still has some duties left, he is not a Gnani.

Question: - It is written in the Shastras that if a person's behavior is contrary to what the Shastras ordain, or in some other wrong manner, he suffers the consequences. Bhagwan punishes such people. However we see people who do all kinds of despicable things are the most successful in life. Is this success their punishment? If not, why doesn't Bhagwan punish them?

Answer: - My brother, what you call success in life is not success at all in my drishti. I will agree with you if you say that a person who has sukha and shanti in his hriday is successful in life. How can I accept that a person is successful in life if he is dukhi and ashanta, even if he has a large Kingdom, great wealth, a lot of followers, political power, a large family, and many servants? I do not consider such a person to be successful in life.

What I mean to say is that a person who earns money by wrong means, stealing and being dishonest may have heaps of money, but he can never have sukha in his hriday. He is bound to have dukha. Some people have the dukha of not being respected in society, some because they don't have a son, and some because of their shareer.

So, it is not that your mana tells you to believe that people who indulge in all kinds of wrong-doing are sukhi. You consider that being wealthy, having a flourishing business, a position of power, etc means being successful in life. I cannot agree. If we believe these things to be the measure of success – the lives of us, Mahatmas, will become unsuccessful and futile. Then, we will also bemoan that these people have a higher position and greater wealth and power!

The fact is that success does not lie in outward pomp and show. A person who has sukha in his hriday, and has shanti in his hriday, is a success. A person's jeevan is successful if he gives sukha-shanti to others. The jeevan of a habitual wrongdoer has no success in it.

There is a gentleman who comes to meet me in Vrindavan. I also go to his house occasionally. This gentleman told me that he has immense wealth kept in a foreign land, but I find that he is always dukhi, whenever he meets me. He gets

upset about small things. Sometimes it is because his wife doesn't agree with what he wants to do, sometimes because his brother took something from his house, or because his son doesn't listen to him, or some other problem. He sheds bitter tears. It is difficult to comfort him.

This is why I consider a person to be a punyatma when he feels he is sukhi and at peace with himself, and he gives sukha-shanti to others. I consider his jeevan to be a successful jeevan even if he has little or no worldly wealth or position.

Question: - Mrityu is inevitable; how can we be free of the bhaya of mrityu?

Answer: - My brother, Bhagwan did a great kripa by giving me the bhaya of mrityu. Had the bhaya of mrityu not been there, people would do a great many more bad things! They would have no wish to stop themselves from doing paapa; nor would they wish to obtain Bhagwan, or an amrita-jeevan. Therefore the pinch of the powder of bhaya added by Bhagwan to our birth-charts is of great benefit for us.

Nothing created by Bhagwan is useless. He gave us bhaya to save us from wrongdoing. He gave us lobha so that we have a desire for Vaikunth and obtain Him. Nothing given by Him is bad. You feel bhaya, so fear mrityu and do good deeds; don't do bad deeds.

Now, regarding how you can be free of the fear of death – when you become one with the amara; the undying, eternal Atma, you will obtain amritva. The thought of mrityu will no longer trouble you.

I will tell you about myself. When I was born, the position of the stars in my birth-chart indicated that my jeevan would end at the age of nineteen. My family were all astik, they had shraddha, and were professional astrologers for generations. My grandfather was an astrologer of considerable renown, but he consulted the best Pundits of Kashi, like Mahamahopadhyaya Pundit Ayodhyanathji, his son Babai, Ranganathji, and others. After examining my birth-chart they all confirmed my grandfather's reading. My family was fully convinced that I my mrityu would

take place when I turned nineteen. They got me married early so that children would be born and the lineage would continue. And, children were born. I was also fully prepared.

When I began to understand all this, the bhaya of mrityu filled my mana. At times I wanted to wander in some forest, wear black clothes, or live in total seclusion. A variety of thoughts came to me. It was as though I was going out of my mind.

During this period I got the association of some Sants. They told me, ‘we cannot remove mrityu, but we can remove your bhaya of mrityu.’ They told me about the power of Bhagwan’s bhakti, and gave me Tattvagnan. They explained that the Atma is ajar and amara – it is not subject to decay and death. The janma and maran are of the shareer, not connected to the Atma at all.

Please note one thing in your diary – mrityu does not come under the scope of experience! A person only imagines, ‘I have died’ is not something that can be experienced, because if he is dead, how can he experience anything? A person has to be alive to experience anything.

Till date, nobody has experienced mrityu; nor will anyone in future. We see the lifeless shareer of a person and imagine our own mrityu. When the time comes to leave our little world we become dukhi at leaving everything we are attached to.

Please know this as a certainty, that you can never have the anubhav ‘I am dead.’ Therefore, know your swarup. Know that you are the son of amrita; you yourself are amrita.

Eeshvara ansha jeeva avinaashee, che`tana amala sahaja sukharaashee.

(The jeeva is an ansha of the Ishwara. He never dies. He is pristine consciousness, and sukha is his nature.)

Please also know that the ghata-akash is a form of the akash. The space inside a pot is not separate from the space outside, and it never dies. It is the akash, space. In the same way, you are an ansha – a part – of the Paramatma and you never die. You are the Paramatma. You will get the anubhav of your swarup, and then you will know that mrityu can never touch you.

Have faith in Bhagwan. Have vishvas in Him.

I will tell you of some incidents in my jeevan. There are of the time when I was living at my house. Once, I went for the darshan of a Mahatma who lived in a village not far from my village. I got late coming back. It was about nine when I started walking on the path beside the Gangaji, on my way back. I felt like taking a bath in the Gangaji. I walked into the water. I did not know swimming, so when I suddenly began to flounder in deep water, it seemed certain that I would drown. Just then, a long arm reached out. I was caught by the scruff of my neck and flung out of the water, on to the bank. When I looked round, there was nobody to be seen. I had the conviction that Hanumanji had saved me.

There was another incident. I had high fever and became unconscious. My friend put my unconscious shareer into a tub of water. In my unconscious state I saw an old woman rushing at me with a naked sword in her hand. Her hair was white, her teeth were crooked, and her face was frightening. Her name was 'Mauta', meaning, death. Hanumanji came running from behind me, brandishing his Gada. He did not need to use it because the old woman ran away as soon as she saw him. Then I regained consciousness. This happened some fifty years ago.

I don't know whether such miraculous incidents should be spoken of or not. Many people talk of them and many don't. Those who have been associated with me for thirty years and more know that the illness that made me unconscious never bothered me after that incident. It left me forever that day.

I have told you of many things. Bhagwan gave me the bhaya of mrityu, which was of great benefit to me. The Mahatmas I met made me freed me of my fear and made me meet Bhagwan. They gave me Bhagwan's bhakti, and also the Gnan that the Atma is amrita, which removed my bhaya of mrityu.

Please don't fear mrityu. Don't try to escape from its clutches. You are that, which mrityu can never take into its embrace, and can never kill.

Shri Rabindranath Tagore used to say that mrityu is a sweet sleep. A person forgets everything when he sleeps, and at the time of leaving the shareer. The only difference is that when you go to sleep it is with the thought of finding your

little world unchanged when you wake up; but that is not the case when you leave your shareer. People become dukhi at the thought of giving up the things they love – wealth, position, children and grand-children, the shareer they identify with, etc.

For a punyatma mrityu is a doorway to sukha. For a paapi it is filled with dukha. There is no need to fear mrityu even if you believe it is inevitable, because the inevitable cannot be avoided.

Question: - How can we obtain prema for Prabhu?

Answer: - This is an excellent question! Look; there was a time when you did not even know your wife, leave alone have prema for her. Your wife did not even know you; naturally, she did not have prema for you either. When you got married, both of you developed a strong prema for each other. You got so attached to each other that you can give up your life for your spouse.

Now, give your attention to the strong prema that a husband develops for his wife, and a wife develops for her husband. A person you did not even know met you one day. You became friendly. You developed such a bond of friendship that you would do anything for your friend.

I don't wish to elaborate on this, but all the things of this sansara are the same. A person gets a father sometimes and a mother sometimes, a son sometimes and a daughter sometimes. Relationships are established and great prema is developed.

With Bhagwan, it is just the reverse. In the sansara the lover and the loved one meet first, and prema is developed after that. With Bhagwan, prema is developed first and He meets you later.

First, develop a relationship with Bhagwan without having met Him. What is the relationship you feel you have with Him? Do you feel He is your Swami? If so, then be alert about doing His seva meticulously. If you feel He is your mother or father, be careful to give sukha to Him. Don't do anything that would hurt His feelings. If you consider Him to be your close friend – your sakha – don't behave in a way

that is contrary to the principles of friendship. Don't have deceit. If you feel Bhagwan is your darling child, do His seva the way a child is nurtured and cherished. If you feel He is your Beloved, lavish love on Him. And, if you feel He is your Atma – what can be better? A person loves himself the most in the whole world. You will be able to understand this when the time comes.

As long as Bhagwan is some other – not our own – we have to form the habit of having prema for Him. We also have to make sure that the prema doesn't slip away. Our own jeevan is developed by the habits we form. When we understand that the Atma and the Paramatma are one, our natural prema for our Self gets transformed to Bhagwan.

What happens is that our innate prema for ourselves becomes prema for Bhagwan, and His poornata, His advitiyata, is ours as well. We become the complete and non-dual Atma. Prema for Bhagwan becomes natural. We get the Gnan that there is no duality. The Atma is non-dual. The prema we had for all the separate objects of this world becomes prema for the paripoorna Paramatma.

Thus, we see that the habit we have formed brings us absolutely close to the Paramatma, and therefore, we should never give up the habit of doing bhajan. Else, we run the risk of prema for Bhagwan diminishing.

To develop prema for Bhagwan you should do something to please Him. Walk a little for Bhagwan every day. To walk for good health is another matter, to walk to fulfill some worldly desire is another matter, and to walk for Bhagwan is altogether a different matter! Go to a Mandir to do darshan, and do His parikrama. If this is not possible, place a picture of Bhagwan on a table or chair, and circumambulate it four times as worship.

If you want to give prema to Bhagwan, do some work for Him with your own hands. Your servant may cook your food, but you should make a roti to offer Bhagwan in bhoga. The servant may sweep the floor in your house, but you should sweep the floor in the Puja room. Speak for Him – chant His name or recite passages that eulogize Him. Use your ears to listen to His katha or bhajans. Use your eyes to look at His image. Smell tulsi leaves or incense with your nose. Use

your tongue to taste His prasād. Use all your indriyas to connect you to Bhagwan for a little while every day. By 'a little while', I mean that you should see how much time you can give, and use it in Bhagwan's service on a daily basis.

One gentleman came to me one day. He told me, 'Maharaj, I do not believe in Bhagwan.'

'Fine, I said.' A little later, I asked him, 'do you believe in me?'

'Yes, Maharaj! I believe in you.' I thought to myself, 'this man is caught!'

Then I asked him, 'your daily income is one thousand four hundred and forty minutes. I ask you for only fourteen minutes. Can you give me fourteen minutes every day?'

He thought for a moment, then he said, 'yes, Maharaj.'

'Very well,' I said. 'For fourteen minutes every day, believe in me. Then, you can believe in the Ishwara, or not, as you please.'

The man said, 'all right, Maharaj.'

'Now, to please me, chant the name of Rama for fourteen minutes every day, 'I said.

The man agreed to do this. This was about ten or fifteen years ago. Now he is a devoted bhakta of Bhagwan. He has vishvas for Bhagwan and he also has paurush. And so, my brother, keep aside some of the fourteen hundred and forty minutes you have.

You have some space in your house, on the walls, if not on the floor. Surely there will be a little space – four, six or ten feet – where you can put up a picture of Bhagwan.

That means, give Bhagwan a little time and a little space to begin to come close to Him. Give him some object – offer Him flowers or dry fruit – and do some work for Him. Speak for pleasing Him. If you begin to give these every day to Bhagwan,

a relationship will develop naturally with Him. Your real relationship with him will be revealed. You will see that you have developed prema for Bhagwan.

One more point to keep in mind is that when we want to develop prema for somebody, we can do so for a person who is before our eyes. We can see his beauty, his deeds, and his gunas. However, if he is not before our eyes prema cannot develop unless we hear about Him in discourses and obtain Gnan about Him from Mahatmas. We must have mahatmya-gnan about Bhagwan.

Just think of how great a source of dukha prema becomes, if the person we have prema for dies, and we are left in this sansara. So, instead of doing prema to a mortal we should do prema to Bhagwan, who is ajar and amara. There is no possibility of His dying!

And, we do prema but the other person does not understand how much prema we have for him – what is the use of having prema for such a fool? We should do prema to a person who understands our prema; and nobody can compare with Bhagwan when it comes to understanding us. This is why we should do prema to Bhagwan. Furthermore, we should do prema to somebody who is capable of removing our dukha. The people of this world don't have this capacity; only Bhagwan knows what is in our hriday, and only He has the power to remove our dukha. So, we should do prema only to Him.

In order to get prema for Bhagwan, listen to discourses about Him. Understand with what great prema He responds to your prema. Listen to the stories of Sudama, Draupadi and others to understand His prema. Keep in mind also, that you should associate with people who have prema for Bhagwan. Listen to their talk, and read about Bhagwan's premis. A hundred lamps can be lit from the flame of one lamp. If there is just one person whose hriday is filled with prema for Bhagwan, you can connect your hriday to his and the light of prema for Bhagwan will burn rightly in your hriday.

Let go of the deceit and hypocrisy of this sansara; true prema for Bhagwan will come into your hriday. If you truly want to get prema for Bhagwan, stay alert and mingle with people who have prema for Him.

Question: - What should the relationship of a Guru-shishya be like?

Answer: - My brother, all the relationships in this sansara are incomplete. The Guru is one who makes his shishya the Paramatma. '*Krittvaa moorttiparignaanam*' – the one who gives you Gnan about the Paramatma, makes you meet Him, makes his shishya one with the Paramatma – that is the real Guru. Then, the relationship of Guru-shishya is broken.

That means, neither does the Guru remain the Guru nor does the shishya remain the shishya. Both merge into the Paramatma and become one. In vyavhar, however, it is different – the Guru remains the Guru and the shishya remains the shishya.

In the drishti of the Guru the shishya becomes the Paramatma; no difference remains between the Guru and the shishya and the Paramatma. They are one in any case! Relationships are with others; there is no relationship with one's self. Our self is our Self!

We see that in the beginning there is the relationship of Guru-shishya, but later they become one, because the actual swarup of both is the Paramatma.

What is it that you actually mean with the word 'relationship'? Whether a shishya should do dandavat pranam to the Guru or not? Or, whether the shishya should obey the Guru or not? All this is done in the beginning. At the end, the shishya is what the Guru is and the Guru is what the shishya is.

Vedantis recite daily: 'there is no Guru and no shishya; only I exist.'

Question: - How should we do Bhagwan's japa, which gives mangal? Please do kripa and explain the rules of doing japa.

Answer: - My brother, the fact is that I feel great pleasure at the thought that you do japa!

‘J’ means janma – janma and maran. One who is born dies one day. And ‘p’ means raksha – to protect, to save. That, which protects you from janma and maran, is japa. Japa frees us from the cycle of rebirth.

To do japa properly, a person needs a Guru. He needs to get diksha from his Guru, needs a sanskara, and the mantra should be a jagrit mantra; it should be animated. Furthermore, there should be attachment and a feeling of belonging.

However, if you are doing the japa of only Bhagwan’s naam there is no need for a Guru, diksha, or sanskara. Bhagwan’s naam belongs to everybody. You can take it with great prema.

If you are doing japa, the important thing is that the mantra should be given to you by your Guru. This is the wealth of the Guru – he has to give it to you for you to get this wealth. The method of the mantra-japa is also given by the Guru. Some of the points are obvious.

The number of the japa you do should be according to the number of syllables in the mantra. If the mantra is a twelve syllable mantra it should be done a minimum of twelve malas. If this is not possible to do daily, you should do the malas in groups of two a day, which will complete the number in six days. Or, do three malas a day, which will take four days, and so on. The calculation is that the number of malas mandatory for the anushtana should be completed.

Now, regarding the vidhan – the rules – of the mantra – if I tell you about them in detail you will feel distressed about something you may not be doing. Then, somebody will tell you to do a penance to atone for the lapse, or do an ‘utkeelan’ – a ritual to free you from the consequences of your mistake. Someone will tell you that you should not do japa when walking. People create doubts to make you their disciple. So don’t try to obtain detailed information – just do what your Guru has told you to do. This will give you kalyan.

If your Yagnopaveeta sanskara has been done you should do the ritual of the Sandhya Vandan and the japa of the Gayatri mantra. This is very important, because if you disdain the Gayatri mantra the other mantra will not come into your mana easily. It will think, ‘he left the Gayatri mantra; he may leave me one

day.’ If a man divorces his wife, another woman will hesitate to marry him thinking he may divorce her also. A mantra needs single-minded faith.

Another point is that if you go with the same wish to five or seven Devtas, you won’t know which Devta fulfilled your wish. This will be known only when the Devtas have a meeting to discuss this! Thus, a single-minded faith is needed for your mantra as well as for your Ishtadev.

Understand this thus – just as there is only one man for a woman who is completely devoted to her husband, there is only one Ishtadev for a bhakta. Just as a good wife respects and serves her husband’s family and relatives, a bhakta should respect and serve all the Devtas because of their connection to his Ishtadev, but remain totally devoted to his Ishtadev.

People have a tendency to ask for things from different people. This is not proper. When people start borrowing money from several sources, other people feel, ‘oh, he will manage to get a loan from someone or another. He is very smart. What is the need for me to give him a loan?’

Therefore, if your husband is unable to give you an expensive sari to wear, wear an ordinary sari. If he is unable to give you even an ordinary sari, make do with what you have, even if it is torn. You should not go to some other man and ask him for a sari. In the same way there should be total dependence on your Ishtadev.

The main point in japa is:

Mantraikasharano vidvaan mantrame`va sadaabhyase`t.

If you want to do the japa of only one mantra you can do japa in any state – pavitra or apavitra – using the proper rules or not, and so japa at any place. There are no restrictions.

One thing more – this naam of Bhagwan and this mantra of Bhagwan contain all Bhagwan’s shakti. We may say that Bhagwan’s naam is greater than Him, but the greatness of the naam and the greatness of the mantra are His greatness. Had Bhagwan not been great, His naam and mantra would not be great. It is His shakti

that pervades His naam and mantra. Just as everything that exists is pervaded by the Brahman, everything is pervaded by Bhagwan's naam.

What I mean to say is that you can take His name anywhere. There is no need to see whether the place is clean or not. When is the Paramatma not there? He is there all the time, so His name is also there all the time.

The Paramatma is ever-present and present everywhere, and so is His name. And so, it is not appropriate to think, 'I will take Bhagwan's name under such and such circumstances, at this particular time.' Who knows if such circumstances will ever come? Take His name today itself, take it now, in whatever state you are.

You should not say, 'I will not take Bhagwan's naam with the Vaikhari vani (speech that can be heard), I will take it with the Madhyama vani (silently), and then with the Pashyanti vani (where speech begins) and then with the Para vani (beyond speech).' Such complications should not be attached to taking Bhagwan's naam. Bhagwan has given you a tongue; use it to take His name with shraddha.

Even if you don't have shraddha there is no need to feel disheartened. Take Bhagwan's name assiduously; shraddha will come. Look – you know that this is Bhagwan's naam. You chant it because it is His name. To create shraddha it is enough that your tongue utters His name repeatedly. Your prana raises and lowers your tongue so you can say His name. Go on chanting His name and let your mana wander as it wants. It will wander around a bit and then come back. Never think, 'I will take Bhagwan's naam when my mana becomes pavitra.' Chant His name and your mana will become pavitra.

To utter Bhagwan's naam is not the fruit of being pavitra; pavitrata is the fruit of chanting Bhagwan's naam! Don't make the fruit the sadhan and the sadhan the fruit.

Chant the name you know to be Bhagwan's, using the method you know. The naam will bring the naami – the one whose name it is – before you, because the naami has placed His entire shakti in His name. So, don't go into the complexities of rules and methods. Just chant His name without worrying about them.

Question: - What is the importance of the mala in doing japa?

Answer: - The mala is of great importance in doing japa. Mantras of the Vaishnava Sect are done mostly on a mala made of beads made of the wood of a tulsi tree. The wood of the red sandalwood tree is used for the beads of a mala on which the Devi mantras are chanted. Malas are also made of birch trees, and Rudraksha berries.

There is also a mala of only ten beads. This is called a 'kara mala'. A normal mala has one hundred and eight beads, with a Sumeru - a double bead that is the starting point.

The method of japa done with a Rudraksha mala is that the Sumeru must not be crossed over. Japa is started with the 'anamika' – the ring finger and continued with the 'madhyama' – the middle finger. This japa has to be learned. The first finger should not touch the mala. The mala should be kept level with the heart while doing japa. Apart from this, keep in mind that you should not let anybody see your mala.

Just as there is a ritual of Guru-diksha there is also a ritual of doing the sanskara of the mala. Chandan is applied to the mala before it is consecrated, the way the prana-pratishtha is done, to evoke the prana in an idol in a new Mandir before it is inaugurated.

Now, when you listen to all these things, you will think, 'oh, the pratishtha of my mala is not done. How can I do japa?'

Do japa taking Bhagwan's naam! Give your mala an occasional Ganga-snan by dipping it in Ganga-jala. Apply a little ghee on it sometimes, but don't leave it lying in the open, or else a crow may fly off with it!

The mahatva of doing japa with a mala is that you can keep count of the malas you have done. Just as a man who works from home knows exactly how much he has earned that day, and feels satisfied if he has done well, a person feels satisfied when he knows the number of the malas he has done. Japa done without counting is not included in Dharma, so a count of your japa should be kept. The

number one hundred and eight is an excellent number for japa. It is the form of the Brahman and the mala is also a form of the Brahman. The calculation of the letters in 'Brahm' – b, r, h, m – these four consonants and vowels add up to one hundred and eight, using the method they are calculated by. When counting, the numbers are divided into groups of a hundred, and the eight is not included. Then the feeling is created about how many malas you have done.

If your mana is restless, look at each bead as you chant the naam or mantra, and then pass on to the next one. If you do the japa of 'Rama', say 'Rama' once as you look at the bead, and then pass on to the next bead and say 'Rama', and so on. Some of you may have seen how villagers weighed commodities on the old fashioned balance scales, saying 'Rama hi Rama'. In the same way, take the name of Rama with every bead as you do your mala.

Or else, japa can be done by saying 'Rama one, Rama two' etc. You can also use the alphabet, saying 'Rama a, Rama b, Rama c' and so on. Japa can be done by any of these methods with the kara mala also. There is a japa done with the time. Lazy people do japa using a clock. They don't realize when their mana goes wandering. They don't even get the punya of doing the action of the mala with their hands.

The mala has great importance in attaching our mana to Bhagwan, and doing japa properly. The mala brings out Bhagwan's beauty for us. *Maa* = beauty; *laa* = the giver. This is why the *maalaa* is called the mala.

Question: - The Vedas say that the Brahman is nirakara; without form and without a birth. Then, why are Rama and Krishna called Avatars of the Brahman? Please clarify this for me.

Answer: - The thing is, the nirguna, nirakara Brahman feels a little sad when nobody asks about Him. He also gets a bit bored by Himself. I also feel bored when I sit alone in my room. So, the Brahman also gets bored by Himself and the He comes out of His castle to mingle with you all.

I will tell you a little about the Brahman. The Brahman does not have a father or mother. He has no brothers or sisters or friends. He has no clothes to wear – He is nirguna. *Ni* =no, *guna* = thread; no clothes! The Brahman has no clothes and no food – He is an abhokta. The Brahman does not have age either; He exists since time immemorial. Furthermore, He has nowhere to stay; He cannot fit into any building! Occasionally, He feels like coming and seeing how people are living happily on this earth, so He takes an Avatar.

Take what I say seriously. If your question came from a philosophical drishti, I ask you a counter question: Is the Atma nirakara or not? Oh, my Arya Samaji brother, my Brahm Samaji brother, my Muslim brother, my Christian brother – is this Atma you have nirakara or is it sakara? If your nirakara Atma can have a shareer – if karma can make the nirakara Atma have a shareer – then can't the nirakara Parameshwara be independent in assuming a shareer when He wants?

If you see somebody fall into a ditch but don't any pity or go to his rescue, what kind of a manushya are you?

You may have heard this story about how Akbar once taunted Birbal by saying, 'Doesn't your Ishwara have people He can send, the way I send my representatives to lead my army in war, and to different places to reward deserving people and punish wrongdoers? Why does your Ishwara have to come Himself?'

'Jahanpanah, what you say is true,' said Birbal meekly.

A few days later, Akbar went boating with his retinue. Birbal had made a plan. He got a doll that looked like a baby, dressed it as Akbar's son, and gave it to one of the lady attendants, explaining the matter to her. When the boat came into midstream, she let the doll fall into the Jamuna as though by accident. Without a second thought Akbar jumped into the river to save his son. When he realized it was a doll, he was furious. 'Who is the rascal who has played this trick?' he roared.

Birbal stepped forward. ‘Sarkar!’ He said, ‘there were so many of us, your devoted servants – any of us would have jumped into the river at once. Why did you jump in yourself?’

Akbar said, ‘when I saw my son fall into the water, I forgot everything else/’

Thus, my brother, Bhagwan is so compassionate that in spite of being nirakara, the Ishwara of the Arya Samajis metes out justice. He punishes the wicked and rewards the good. He may be nirakara, but what kind of Ishwara would He be if He didn’t have compassion?

See the svabhava of the Atma and also see the svabhava of the Paramatma. What kind of an Ishwara would He be, if He could not take an Avatar to give sukha to His bhaktas, give darshan to those who yearn for His darshan, and observe the boundaries He has set, for correct behavior?

If you are intent on a Shastrartha, I am not willing to indulge you, but this is written in the Shastras:

Ajaayamaano bahudhaa vijaayate`.

Read the mantras of the Vedas. Bhagwan is nirakara but He is a father – ‘yo nah pitaa’. He is nirakara but He is young – ‘yuvaa suvaasaah’. He is a young man and wears beautiful clothes, and His friends stay with Him. Since the time of birth, He is superior and has superior gunas.

Therefore if you have vishvas in the janma of a jeeva, and you have a shareer even though you are the nirakara Atma, then there is no reason for you to doubt that the nirakara Ishwara can take an Avatar! If you want to preserve Him, have vishvas in the Ishwara, in His supreme power and His being all-knowing.

Question: - Generally, all the Rishis are married men. Please tell me the name of any one Rishi who was a baal-brahmachari.

Answer: - Ribhu, Aruni, Hansa, Narad, and the Sanakadi Rishis were all brahmacharis since their early childhood. They never got married. (These names are undisputed.)

The question should not be whether the Rishis were married or unmarried. The question should be whether they had the sakshatkara of the Atma being the Brahman or not; whether they got prema for Bhagwan or not.

A Rishi's being a Rishi does not depend on whether he is married or not; it is in his reaching his goal, obtaining true Gnan, the actual vastu, and true anand. It is in whether he obtained inner shanti or not. How does it matter whether he was married or not? Marriage is an external matter, and a very insignificant matter, of importance only to followers of a Pantha; not for one who gives profound thought to the supreme Satya.

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Question: - How can we remove the Manthara hidden in our mana?

Answer: - Bharat's mana remained unaffected by Manthara. So, the treatment for Manthara is to think of Bharatji, and do the paatha of his charitra. Bharat is the name of the shareer of Rama-prema. If Bharatji abides in our antahkarana, and we get prema for Rama-naam, Manthara will go away from our mana.

Manthara is there only in the beginning. There is no mention of her after that. She was there to create trouble. She did the harm, and Shatrugnaji gave her some punishment, and after that there is no mention of her.

There are many Sanskrit commentaries on the Valmiki Ramayana, including those by Shri Ramanuja Acharyaji Maharaj, Tilak, Shiromani, Bhooshan and some others. The followers of Shri Ramanuja Acharyaji are of the opinion that sharanagati should be taken only of a person who is superior. Why was Kaikeyi destroyed? It was because she took Manthara's sharan. Why was Dashrath destroyed? It was because he took Kaikeyi's sharan. The sharanagati of a lowly person is never successful.

If it is the feelings of your mana that give you dukha, you should replace them with superior feelings. By bringing bhava for Bharatji into your mana, Manthara will automatically be destroyed. You won't even know of her existence.

The essential point is that you must have prema for Bhagwan. Your sharan should be Bhagwan. You should do smaran of Bhagwan and pray to Him. He is the only one who can make us free of the negative influences of Manthara. There is no other recourse for us.

Question: - How can we maintain our vyavhar in this sansara and also become free of raaga-dvesha?

Answer: - the fact is, when we have some urge about things being done the way we want, it creates problems in vyavhar. The wife wants her husband to do what she wants, and the husband wants her to do what he wants. Brothers, father-son, master-servant, friends and others all have this tussle. Each person considers his wish to be justified. People give importance to their own mana, but do not understand that the mana of the other is equally important to them. Then dukha comes.

The way to save yourself from this dukha is to realize from the start that the shareer and mana of the other is not an unfeeling machine to be moved as we want. Every person has their own mana. If we keep the mana of the other in mind, and don't do anything to hurt or offend them, and don't insist on what we want we can save ourselves from dukha.

Don't consider your wish to be of paramount importance. Don't submit to an access of mamata and favoritism. Respect the wishes of others – of your parents, your spouse, siblings and others.

Once I felt dukha because one man did not do pranam to me. I felt it was a personal insult because traditionally that man was of a family of the disciples of my father and grandfather. I spoke of this to a Mahatma. He said, 'the vasana that was in your mana that this man should bow down to you, gave you this dukha. The dukha was not given by the man who did not do pranam to you.'

It is important that you remain alert that your mana doesn't become dukhi because of your own vasana. People don't want to sit on a lower level. They don't want to do what they are told to do. They look askance at you and speak slightly. You become dukhi because their behavior is not to your liking.

One Sant used to tell us, 'when things happen according to your preference, you feel pleased. You should feel even more pleased when things happen against your preference, because what has happened is according to the preference of your Beloved, Bhagwan!' Bhaktas say the same thing in a different way. They tell Bhagwan, 'today, You did what is pleasing to You, but not pleasing to me. What

You did was very good! Your great prema for me made You do kripa on me and overrule my preference!’ They feel very sukhi.

There was some ritual to be organized and I wanted things to be done in a particular way. When the matter came before Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, he said it should not be done the way I had said, but in another way. This did not cause any dukha in my mana. On the contrary, I felt touched that Baba felt close enough to me, to change the arrangement unhesitatingly.

What is to be seen is where do the raaga-dvesha come from. They come from guna-dosha, which are extremely difficult to recognize, because they are not external. Outside, everything is the Brahman. Everything is the Ishwara. Everything is Maya, it is Prakriti, and it is the pancha bhoota. All movements are karma, and from the drishti of Prakriti, there are humans and the other species. None of them are worth seeking guna-doshas in.

We have a guna-buddhi for those for whom we have prema or raaga, and a dosha-buddhi for those for whom we have dvesha. Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj had explained this to me as well – *‘basanti hi pre`mna gunaa na vastunih’*. No matter what our son does, we quickly find an argument to justify it, and if another’s son does even a good thing we find fault in it.

Thus, we see gunas in people we have raaga for, and dosha in those we have dvesha for. Therefore, before removing the gunas and doshas of others, we should remove the raaga-dvesha in our own mana. And, the way to do this is to remember that Bhagwan abides in the mana of the other as well. We should have prema for him. If we don’t get this feeling of goodwill we should understand that it is the dosha of our own mana.

Nobody is good and nobody is bad in the outside world; it is your own mana that is good or bad. If you remain alert about improving your mana, it will improve very fast. Therefore –

‘Yad vadanti yad ichhanti chaanumode`t nirmamah.’

Whatever people say and want in the outside world encourage and support it with a feeling of detachment, without expecting anything, and with compassion.

Somebody will say, 'let's go ahead', agree to go ahead. Somebody will say, 'let's go back', agree and go back. Somebody will tell you to sit on the ground and somebody will tell you to sit on a chair. Sit on the ground or on the chair, as they want. That means, don't oppose anybody for the sake of your own comfort or convenience. Raaga will not come into your mana if you remain vigilant.

When you feel, 'he has given me dukha,' then you feel dvesha for that person. When you feel 'he has given me sukha,' then you feel raaga for that person. This is according to your karma. It is not that karmas stay at some far-away place; they stay right here, with you. Even the karmas done in previous births stay in your hriday, having created their own sanskaras. You get dukha if you have given dukha, and sukha if you have given sukha. Had the karmas been far away it could have hindered your efforts to improve them, but they have all accumulated in your hriday.

If Bhagwan's bhakti comes into your hriday, just go on doing your duty in this sansara. Bhagwan's bhakti is *kle`shahaarinee* – it removes all the distress, avidya, asmita, raaga, dvesha and abhinivesh, which are the principal causes of our dukha. Bhakti even removes the dukha given by our prarabdha! Let Gnan come when it will; just keep in mind that nothing is worth having raaga-dvesha for.

I have seen people who once had enmity for me become my friends. I have seen people who were my friends develop enmity for me. People we feel to be our own become alienated, and strangers become closer than our own. Nothing in this world is stable, and so – be vigilant in your interaction with others.

There was a prosperous farmer called Mangal Singh who lived in the village next to my village. He had a very large family of some seventy or eighty people. They lived together amicably and ate in a common kitchen. One day I asked Mangal Singhji, 'Babuji, how do you manage to hold such a large family together so lovingly?'

‘Babaji’, he said – I was called ‘Babaji’ since early childhood – ‘before I eat I count to check that every member of my family has eaten. I eat only after every person has finished eating. At times it is four or even five in the afternoon when I have my lunch. I never eat if there is somebody in the family who has not eaten.

The other thing I am particular about is the clothes of every family member, giving the most importance to the youngest! Every day I ask every member of my family how they are feeling and whether they have any problem.’

When a person is so vigilant in his vyavhar he can become free of raaga-dvesha in his jeevan.

I will tell you one more thing, although one gentleman has taken affront when he heard me say this. I speak of it because it is given in the Bhagwat and it is of some importance in our vyavhar. Three points are given in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of the seventh canto of the Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapurana.

- (i) That which is produced by your sweat and that which is produced by the sweat of another, are the same. If you can see both with equal respect you can live in amity.
- (ii) How much is yours in this world? ‘*Yaavad bhriye`t jatharam*’ – only what goes into your stomach, and is rightfully yours to eat, is what you have got. Regarding the rest, nobody knows whether it is yours by right or not.

One man in Jabalpur found four hundred rupee notes. He put them into an iron box and buried it in the ground. He dug it out after four months. There was only water in the box. Thus, my brother, only what goes into your stomach is yours. Nobody knows whether the things outside are rightfully yours or not.

So, the first point written in the Bhagwat is to understand that your son and another man’s son are the same. Only what goes into your shareer is yours.

- (iii) The third point given in the Bhagwat is quite amazing! If a guest comes to your house, you must do his seva, but not only that – you must also tell your wife to do his seva. A man has so much mamata for his wife

that he gets dvesha for even his mother, father and Guru for her sake. He is ready to die for her. So, you should make the one for whom you have such mamata do seva of others people. This weakens the mamata.

These three points given in the Bhagwat answer your question about how to make your jeevan free of raaga-dvesha while living in the sansara as a family man, and also get the sukha of Jeevanmukti.

According to the Bhagwat, these three points were told to Raja Yudhishtira when he asked Naradji the same question, after hearing the discussion of Dattatreya and Prahlad. Therefore, if you remain alert there will be no difficulty in achieving this.

I will tell you of another incident in this context. There were two brothers who lived together with great prema. They were partners in the business and lived together, eating from the same kitchen. Both were married and had one son each. One day the younger brother went to the market. He came home with a mango in each hand. Both little boys came up running, 'Uncle, mango!' 'Papa, mango!' The son of the elder brother was on the side of the hand that held the bigger mango and the man's son on the side of the hand that held the smaller mango. The man quickly crossed hands and gave the larger fruit to his own son.

The elder brother observed this, but did not say anything. They had their dinner together as usual. Then the elder brother said, 'we should now separate our assets and live separately.'

'Why, brother?' asked the younger brother. 'Why are you saying this? Have I done anything wrong? If I have made some mistake please forgive me. Why do you want to separate? I will do whatever you say. Nothing will be done against your wish.'

The elder brother told him, 'I am still living, and in my presence you gave my son the smaller mango. How can I have faith that you will treat my son fairly when I am no more? So, it is better that we separate now.'

There are many things in vyavhar that are to be seen and heard. If saris come to your house, give the nicest ones to others and keep the not-so-nice ones for yourself. When food is cooked, give the best to others and eat what is left. I am telling you small, simple things so that it may have some effect.

There was an aristocratic gentleman who lived close to our village. He had become old and impoverished at the time of this incident. His family was traditional disciples of my clan. He called me to his house one day. I went, and sat next to him. He had a sweet called mohanbhog made for me.

‘There is great anand in eating after feeding others, isn’t there?’ the words slipped out from my mouth.

‘No, Babaji,’ he said. ‘So what if you are my Guru? I am much older than you. I had shaken hands with King George V when he came to Delhi. So, I can say this to you – the fact is that eating after feeding someone does not give as much anand as feeding someone and going hungry yourself. The pleasure of feeding others is the anand of the Ishwara, and the pleasure of feeding one’s self is the anand of the jeeva.’

Thus, the Ishwara feels happy by feeding others and the jeeva feels happy by eating. If the jeeva also begins to feel happy at feeding others, then sakshat Bhagwan will manifest in his form.

Question: - How can we gain control over our indriyas?

Answer: - The Charak Samhita gives seven causes of a person’s development: the influence of the parents, the parents of both parents, the previous births, and the mother’s state when the baby was in the womb, and the lifestyle of the person when he grows up, all have their effect.

If the man is the son of a people with a good Dharmik lifestyle, he will not find it difficult to control his indriyas. The son of an immoral and promiscuous man, however, will have difficulty in practicing self-restraint. Therefore it is very beneficial to inculcate these habits in childhood itself.

Dharma-sanskaras have to be inculcated. The sanskaras in a person's nature come naturally, like hair growing in some parts of the shareer, and not in others. This is the vikar of Prakriti. Vikars need to be treated. Dry hair needs to be oiled, and unmanageable hair needs to be tied up. If there is no hair the person has to get hair implant done or wear a wig. This is called the *heenangapoorti* sanskara, meaning, rectifying some lacking. Then there is the *gunaadhaana* sanskara which means to deposit something that is needed. There is also the *doshapanayana* sanskara, meaning, removing doshas like blemishes by using some medicinal paste.

I had gone to the house of Mahamahopadhyay Laxman Shastri in Kashi one day. I saw that havan was being done and ladies were singing songs in the Tamil language. I asked what the ceremony was for. I was told, 'it is the garbhadhana sanskara today'. (Garbhadhana means depositing the father's seed in the mother's womb, an auspicious ritual for a healthy and good child.) This was the third marriage of Punditraj Shri Rajeshwara Shastri. Just as oil is massaged into the body when the skin becomes dry, and medical paste is applied to remove some blemish on the skin, this shareer had to be developed and treated, and there is a method for this.

In earlier times the Yagnopaveeta sanskara was done at the age of eight for a Brahmin boy, at eleven for a Kshatriya boy and at twelve for a boy from a Vaishya family. Dharma was inculcated according to the lifestyle the boys would be having. The sanskara of girls was done at the same corresponding age, but the girl was sent to her in-law's house to learn the family traditions and values. This was called the 'yukta kaala', meaning, the period of time when the girl learnt to become an integral part of the family. The 'gauna kaala' was when the girl began to live with her husband. This was at double the age. For example, it was at the age of sixteen for a Brahmin girl, twenty two for a Kshatriya girl and twenty four for a girl from a Vaishya family. The boys had to stay at the house of their Guru after the Yagnopaveeta and the girls at the house of their in-laws. Neither the boys nor the girls had prior knowledge about the homes they had to go for their training. They were given a variety of teachings.

In answer to your question, my opinion is that Dharma-sanskaras should be brought into our jeeva from an early age. The meaning of the Yagnopaveeta sanskara is that a young boy is told, 'these are the things you can eat, and these are what you should not eat. These are things you should not touch, smell, or look at. These are things you should not listen to and should not say.' These teachings come into our jeevan.

The arrangement of Dharma is such that fifty percent of the things that are harmful are automatically removed, saving the indriyas from succumbing to their temptations. So, if you want to inculcate the sanskaras of Dharma in your children, do it when they are fairly young. If you haven't done this, do it now. Give them the right habits and convince them that it is of great benefit to take a decision about disciplining one's self in matters of indulging the senses, like eating, seeing, speaking, touching, hearing, etc.

The quintessence of all this is that Dharma removes fifty percent of the harmful things that weaken our capacity to restrain our senses. It is not possible to curtail everything at once – self-restraint has to be built up gradually. And remember, food does not mean only what you consume with your mouth; it means everything you absorb through your senses and what you do. It is all *bhojana*; it is intake. So, control yourself in all these matters.

After that, do Bhagwan's upasana. In upasana you have to go before Bhagwan, who is your Master. Just as a servant makes sure he is neat and clean before he goes into the presence of his master, and he speaks politely. When you go before Bhagwan you should look at Him, fold your hands respectfully, and sit without fidgeting.

If a servant keeps fidgeting and talks excessively, how will his master feel? In upasana, the principle is the same. When you do Bhagwan's upasana you should sit still and look at Bhagwan and talk to Him. Your attention be totally on Him. Keep your limbs still and sit in a respectful manner.

If you display your doshas to Bhagwan – '*tau de`khata avaguna karoon kaise`took bhaaon?*' – and behave badly when He is watching, how will He like you?

Upasana has such power that it can make your indriyas restrained. When the indriyas see that you are interacting with Bhagwan they will restrain themselves. Therefore take from the Ishwara His kripa, stimulus, and shakti. You are His heir, so you can rebuke your indriyas on His behalf. Tell them, 'I refuse to allow you to control me anymore.'

Aba mein tohi jaanyo sansara,

jeeti na sakai mohi maayaa bala nipata kapata aagaara.

(Now I know you for what you are, sansara! You will not be able to overcome me with the strength of your Maya, deceit, and house.)

Challenge the vishays of the sansara. They won't be able to make even a crack in your indriyas. When a person does upasana continuously Bhagwan becomes the only vishay of his indriyas. If a nirodh dasa is achieved – meaning, if the person achieves a state where all thoughts are blocked – then the control of the indriyas is total. 'Trayam e`katra samyamah' – dharana, dhyana and Samadhi, all three, become immersed in Bhagwan. Your mana will become bhagavad-akara.

If your antahkarana becomes shuddha, and jignasa arises, you will develop an urge to know what Bhagwan is, what you are, what is your relationship with Bhagwan, and what happens when you get the Gnan of both, and whether you are one or many. Then you get Tattvagnan, and self-restraint will become your follower. People will say to you, 'Maharajji, please look at me a little,' and you will say, 'all right; who are you?' You will look at him and he will feel peace.

There was a Mahatma. If anybody told him, 'Maharaj, please look at this, he would lift up his eyelids with his finger and thumb, and see the object. I will tell you something that will make you laugh. There was a Mahatma who had reached the venerable age of a hundred and ten years. He lay on his bed all days with his eyes closed. He neither looked at anybody, nor spoke to anybody, though he could see and hear perfectly well. He did not open his eyes even when somebody came into the room.

His disciple, Ramsundardasji would tell him, 'Maharaj, some people have come with a proposal of marriage. They are the family of the girl.'

'Is that so?' he would ask. 'But who will marry me?'

'No, Maharaj; the girl is a very good girl, and she is willing to get married to you.' Hearing this, the Mahatma would open his eyes for a moment, and then shut them again.

There was a Mahatma who lived in a village called Muraina, near Gwalior. He also lay down on his bed all day long, not talking to anybody or looking at anybody. If anybody went close to him and said, 'Maharajji, shake hands,' he would quickly lift up his hand and shake hands with the man. He would shake the man's hand, but not look at him!

Thus, the indriyas come to a state where they function if they want, and not if they don't want! They are fully self-controlled.

Don't lose hope. Don't feel depressed, and don't lose heart. Bhagwan's shakti is with you. Bhagwan is in your swarup. He is in your hriday as the antaryami, and His kripa is showering on you. If it is your desire that your indriyas should be restrained, they will be restrained. After all, it is desire that makes them restless. Your indriyas will become shanta.

It would be beneficial to take a niyam about the things you will eat and the things you won't eat; what you will listen to and what you won't listen to, etc. If anybody did ninda in the presence of Haribabaji, he would tell them, 'Oh, go away! Why are you sully my mana?' You too should stop gossiping about others. Talk about the Ishwara; keep watch over your indriyas and don't allow them to indulge in the wrong things. This is enough to keep them controlled and become disciplined.

Question: - What is the mahima of Vrindavan-dhaam? Please do kripa and tell us a method by which our mana can become Vrindavan-dhaam.

Answer: - Look, my brother, the people and the Shastras all want Bhagwan to be beyond desha, kaala and vastu. The four directions – east, west, north and south – are not there in Bhagwan. They are all in us, the people in this world.

You know that you are sitting in front of me, at a level that is lower. I am sitting on a seat that is higher. However, the tent in which we are sitting is higher than where I am sitting. That means, it is only by placing ‘me’ in the middle that we create higher and lower, east-west-north-south.

There is nothing in front of Bhagwan and nothing behind Him; nothing higher or lower. The four directions are not in Him, nor is there any past or future in Him. Bhagwan’s drishti is so vast that it has no divisions.

That means there is no kaala in Bhagwan. It is in our ‘I’ that the past and future are made. Regarding the vastu – just as we sit as so many lumps of clay, all others are also lumps of clay. Bhagwan does not have this separateness. He is not confined to any one desha or any one kaala. He is not like a lump of clay.

And so, to do bhakti of Bhagwan we have to make Bhagwan something akin to us, and invite Him to our house. Only by this method can we do His puja in a Saligram Shila, Narmadeshwara, or Shiva – as a form, and then do His seva.

It is not possible to do Bhagwan’s puja all the time, so we do His puja at particular times, like early morning, on days like Janamashtami, Ramnavami, Shivaratri, etc. Thus, we do Bhagwan’s puja in any one kaala.

And, since we can’t do Bhagwan’s puja everywhere, we do His puja in one place. If we want to do Shivaji’s puja we do it in Kashi, Ramachandra’s puja is done in Ayodhya, and Shri Radha-Krishna’s puja in Vrindavan. These divine dhaams are described in the Shastras, and other dhaams mentioned in the Shastras are also dhaams. It is a fact that a new dhaam can be created by a spiritually powerful Mahatma who is all-knowing and has the capacity to restrain and grant boons.

Vrindavan-dhaam is Bhagwan’s divya dhaam. The feeling that people have for it is that it is the sakshat roop of the Brahman. It is Sat – meaning, it is eternal. It is Chit – meaning, it is conscious; and it is Anand – meaning, it is filled with rasa.

Vrindavan-dhaam is such that every being who comes into it becomes chinmaya – ‘*yasmin pravishtah sakaloapi jantuh*’. Just as we don’t consider the Saligram Shila to be a stone, we believe it to be sakshat Bhagwan, we consider this Vrindavan-dhaam to be the realm of the sakshat Bhagwan, not an ordinary city. Being His dhaam, Vrindavan becomes dhyeya – the object of dhyana, which is animate. The vastu in dhyana is never inert matter like rocks and clay. In dhyana the object of the dhyana is created by the mana, and is filled with consciousness. Therefore, it cannot be called insensate matter, because shuddha chetan has no form. That is why it is called chinmaya, like the sakshi Atma which has no form either. Gross matter does not exist in the Atma or in the dhyeya.

Bhagwan’s shuddha chetan form is created by the superimposition of the mana that is predominantly filled with bhava and bhakti. This form is filled with consciousness. It is considered to be so divya that all the grains of sand in Vrindavan are believed to be Radha-Krishna. The golden grains are forms of Radha and the black grains are forms of Krishna. The creepers in Vrindavan are forms of Radha and the trees are forms of Krishna. In Vrindavan, ‘*stree raadhaa purushah krishnah*’ – all female forms are forms of Radha and all male forms are forms of Krishna, in every species. They are all Radha-Krishna, Radha-Krishna, Radha-Krishna!

If once you get Brahmagnan, there will be no hindrance in your attaining Mukti even if you forget it at the time of mrityu. Similarly, if a person goes to a dhaam once, and forgets it at the time of his mrityu, there is no obstacle in his getting Mukti. The clay in the shareer merges into the clay of the dhaam. Thus, we see that all the gunas of the Brahman are also present in Bhagwan’s dhaams.

Dhaams are of many types, like the vyapak-dhaam (all-pervading dhaams like Vaikunth), bhavatmak-dhaam (a dhaam where a bhakta got darshan of Bhagwan), drishya-dhaam (dhaams that can be seen, like Vrindavan) etc. Vrindavan is the Capital of the world of the prema of Shri Radha-Krishna. Here, even the trees are engrossed in Bhagwan’s seva-puja. Every tree in Vrindavan is a Kalpavriksha (wish-fulfilling tree), every cow is a Kamadhenu (wish-fulfilling cow) and every pebble is a Chintamani (wish-fulfilling gem).

When you come to Vrindavan you should remain steeped in the feeling that you are in Bhagwan's realm. Here, the most important thing is bhava. If you come here and try to promote your business, talk politics, or try to cheat somebody the influence of the dhaam will be reduced. If you free yourself from worldly concerns and do darshan of Bhagwan's leelas in your mana, you will get the darshan of His leelas everywhere!

There was a Mahatma who was doing the parikrama of Vrindavan, which is ten miles. (The parikrama of Vraja is a hundred and sixty miles.) The Mahatma's nishtha for Vrindavan was very strong. He fully believed that Bhagwan doesn't go out of Vrindavan ever; He always stays within the boundaries of Vrindavan-dhaam. '*Vrindaavana parityajya padame`kam na gachchhati*' – Bhagwan does not take even one step out of the boundaries of Vrindavan.

While doing parikrama, the Mahatma got a fragrance coming from the left, just outside the boundary. 'Oh, this seems to be the fragrance of my Beloved's shareer!' he thought. He turned his face to the right, away from the fragrance. Then he heard the sound of the flute and the tinkling of Bhagwan's anklets. He ignored the sounds. Then, Thakurji came, Himself, and stood there, to entice him. The Mahatma's mana longed for Bhagwan's darshan, but he told it, '*re`mana vrindaa nihaara, yadyapi mile`koti chintamani tou na haatha pasaara.*' The meaning is, 'O my mana, look only at the grove of vrinda trees. Even if you see ten million Chintamanis lying outside, don't reach out for them. Don't even look at Hari if He stands outside the boundary of Vrindavan! Look only at Vrindavan!'

There are people who have such dhaam-nishtha.

There are different types of nishtha – dhaam-nishtha, naam-nishtha, roop-nishtha, leela-nishtha, vanshidhvani-nishtha, nishtha for Radharani and the gopis, nishtha for the dust of Vraja, etc.

Saba chhodakar raja lutata hvai raja mein.' (Bhaktas leave everything and roll about in the raja of Vrindavan.) Uddhavji and Brahmaji also want to apply the raja of Vraja – the dust of Vraja – on their shareer. To want the raja is the peak of

nishkamata. What a beautiful prema it is when a person wants only the raja of Vraja and nothing else!

Thus, people have prema for the dhaam when they have dhaam-nishtha for it.

Why is the dhaam so great?

It is because it is Bhagwan's dhaam, and all the shakti of the Master of the dhaam is in the dhaam.

Similarly, why is the naam so great?

It is because all the shakti of the naami – the one whose name it is – is in His naam.

Therefore, this naam of Bhagwan is what reveals Bhagwan. We don't know Bhagwan; we have never met Him. His naam helps us to know Him. And the dhaam of Bhagwan reveals the sweetness of His leelas, and the beauty that is normally hidden from us. And the greatness of both the naam and the dhaam is the greatness of Bhagwan. Don't think that you can leave Bhagwan and catch His dhaam and naam, and your work will be done! These give you kalyan only because Bhagwan has placed His shakti in them. May Bhagwan's naam give you kalyan. May His dhaam give you kalyan. May Bhagwan's bhava-bhakti come into your hriday.

Question: - Can we do the japa of the sixteen-letter 'Hare Krishna' mantra without taking Guru-diksha? Should there be a fixed number of japa we should do for obtaining Bhagwan? Please explain this.

Answer: - The Kalisantarana Upanishad says that this mantra – *Hare` raama hare` raama raama raama hare` hare`* - has sixteen naams and thirty two letters. It is of them metre called the Anushtup Chanda. Naradji asked Brahmaji, 'what is the method of doing this japa?' In answer, Brahmaji told him, 'there is no method. There are no rules for doing this japa.'

Even though this mantra does not have 'svaha', 'namah' or the Pranav attached to it, it is given in the Upanishad, and therefore, it is a mantra. The fact that it is stated that is no vidhi for the japa of this mantra indicates that the purpose of this statement is to extol its greatness. Regarding the fruit of this mantra, it is written that anybody who does japa of the 'Hare Krishna' mantra – without method or rules, or diksha-sanskara, in a state that may be pavitra or apavitra – gets great benefits. He becomes free of all paapa.

That does not mean that you will get the fruit of doing japa of this mantra only without following any rules; it means that when this mantra gives such fruits even when done without following rules, how much more benefit will you get if you do its japa with the proper method and ruled! If such wonderful benefits are obtained by doing the japa of this mantra even without Guru-diksha, how much greater would the benefit be if japa is done with diksha-sanskara etc!

Therefore, whenever the greatness of a mantra is explained in this way, the actual message is that you should understand how great its power is, and do it with the proper method to get its full benefit.

Regarding becoming free of paapa – in our principle there is one Ishwara (with form and attributes) and one Brahman (without form and attributes). This illusionary sansara is caused by Maya. The paapa-punya in it are not gross objects; they are obtained by the Shastras. When the Shashtra says that all paapas are removed by doing some karma, you should have faith that it is true, and believe that your paapas will indeed be destroyed by doing this karma.

About the number of japa, it is written in the Upanishad that this mantra is to be chanted three and a half crore times (one crore is ten million).

What happens then?

There was a gentleman at Nagpur. His name was Badrichand Poddar. Perhaps some of you may have heard of him. He was old when he came to meet me. He told me, 'Swamiji, I have done three and a half crore japa of Bhagwan's naam, but got no result. Neither did I get Bhagwan's darshan, nor am I able to do dhyana

with concentration. I do not even feel that my paapas have been destroyed. What is the reason for my not getting any anubhav?’

I asked him,

Have you asked Bhagwan for anything, as a reward for doing three and a half crore japa of His naam?’

He said, ‘Maharaj, it happened on several occasions that I was embroiled in a bad legal dispute. I prayed to Bhagwan to save me, in lieu of the fruit of my japa. I prayed to Him when disease came to my shareer, and also when my son was going on the wrong path. I prayed to Bhagwan that my son should come back to the right path. When there were problems in the family I asked that they should be settled amicably.’

Thus, our hriday is actually filled with all kinds of desires but we claim to do our sadhan with a nishkama bhava. That doesn’t work, you know! The wishes we have are first fulfilled and nishkamata comes after that.

Paapas are removed as a fruit of doing mantra-japa. The person gets Bhagwan’s darshan, he gets prema for Bhagwan, and he gets Tattvagnan. All these things happen, but for this you must have a direct personal relationship with Bhagwan.

The more internalized you become, the more you take Bhagwan’s naam with your tongue, the more the shakti of your vani will grow. The more seva you do of Bhagwan the more the shakti of your shareer will grow. The more smaran you do of Bhagwan the more pavitra your mana will become. Continue to take His name – all there will come.

Whether you take Guru-diksha or not, make a Guru or not, get the sanskara done or not, if you are taking Bhagwan’s name – please don’t stop! Hold on to His naam all your life. Then there is kalyan – only kalyan!

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25. 3. 1983.

Question: - How can we maintain a balance between karma, bhakti and Gnan in our jeevan?

Answer: - To walk to a Mandir is karma. To do Bhagwan's darshan and understand that this is Bhagwan is Gnan. When you feel that Bhagwan is very adorable and start to get rasa in Him, and keep thinking of Him, develop prema for Him, that is bhakti.

Walking is karma, seeing is Gnan, and getting prema for Bhagwan is bhakti. These three are present in the jeevan of every person. Bhagwan has divided the indriyas into two groups – the *gnaane`ndriya* and the *karme`ndriya* – meaning the organs of knowledge (or sense organs) and the organs of action. A manushya's external jeevan is made by our using our senses and our organs of action. Continue to act and continue to understand; continue to understand and continue to act.

There was an old man who lived in a village in olden times. His master told him to bring something from a house that was one mile away. The day was already darkening. The man told his master, 'Babu, I won't be able to see my way in the dark. How will I go?'

'Take a lantern with you,' said the master. The man took up the lantern. He had never used a lantern before. 'Babu, this lantern only shows the path for about five feet,' he said, 'how will I go over one mile?'

The Babu explained, 'walk five feet, and the light will go ahead of you and show you the next five feet, and this way, you will cover one mile and also come back.'

Our jeevan also progresses with the use of karma and gnan.

There was a lame man and a blind man. Both had bhakti for Bhagwan and longed to go on a pilgrimage to Badrinath. They became friends and decided to pool their resources. The blind man was young and strong. The lame man sat on his

shoulders and guided him as he walked, and they reached Badrinath in this manner.

This is a sootra – an aphorism – called ‘andha-pangu nyaya’.

If you know what your kartavya is in this sansara, and you omit to do it, Gnan about your kartavya will stop coming to you. If somebody tells you repeatedly what you should do and shows you the right path, and you continue to ignore him, he will stop telling you anything. He will think, ‘what is the use of giving him advice when he has no wish to listen to me?’

The way of the sansara is that the more you work, the more your knowledge increases. The more your knowledge increases the better you work, and the more you enjoy. However, this pertains to the sansara.

Similarly, the more Gnan you obtain about the Ishwara the more prema you will feel for Him and the greater will be your desire to obtain Him. However, there is one point in this – you cannot get Gnan about the Ishwara by any method except shravan. You must listen to discourses that tell you about Him.

And, there is a niyam – a rule – in shravan, that Gnan about the things that are nitya paroksha, always unseen like Swarga, Vaikunth etc, cannot be known by the indriyas. You have to do shravan to get Gnan about them. In the same way, you have to listen to talks about the people who live in Vaikunth, or about the nirakara Ishwara, if you want to know about them. When you like what you hear, then you get a desire for them, and then you do sadhan for obtaining them. And then you get anand in the sadhan. A desire to meet the Ishwara will arise in your hriday and when you meet Him you will experience anand.

The niyam is that Gnan about the nitya paroksha can be obtained by shravan and by no other method. Unless you do shravan you can’t even know the method of the sadhan you need to do to obtain the nitya paroksha vastu! Thus, it is through shravan alone that Gnan about Bhagwan can be obtained, because Bhagwan can neither be seen nor heard. Only by shravan can you know about the methods like Yagna-Yaag etc for pleasing Bhagwan.

The Ishwara is also nitya paroksha. If you don't know Him and want to know Him, you have no option but to listen to talks about Him. Take Gnan about the Atma, for instance. If we are observant we will realize that the one who sits in our hriday and directs the buddhi is the antaryami Parameshwara. He is never paroksha! He does everything before our eyes and yet He is unknown.

Thus, even Gnan about the antaryami Parameshwara is obtained only by doing shravan, and so is Gnan about our nitya-shuddha-buddha –Mukta Atma. When we get Gnan about something we want, we have to make an effort to obtain it.

When you obtain Gnan about the nirakara Ishwara by doing shravan, then you should meditate on Him. Do His dhyana and obey His commands. If you know about the Master of Vaikunth – Vaikunthanath – do His bhajan and develop prema for Him. However, if you have obtained Gnan only about your Atma that is the sakshi of the ruled and the one who rules, is the same in the one who is all-knowing and the one with limited knowledge, is the sakshi of the all-powerful as well as the one with limited strength.

A covering hides His Brahmattva, His characteristic of His being the Brahman who is beyond all the separateness of space, time and matter. He is the sakshi of our antahkarana which is attached to the imagined separations of space, time and matter. Neither space, nor time, nor matter can touch that nirakara Ishwara who is our Atma. That means, if you get the bodha of your Self you don't need to do anything for obtaining yourself! You won't have to develop prema for yourself because everybody loves himself the most. No karma needs to be done for you to obtain yourself.

Now, see for yourself – where are you living in? If you are living in your shareer you should know what your kartavya is. Understand your kartavya and carry out the ordained duties of your shareer – whether the shareer is Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra, or just a manushya.

If you consider yourself to be a Brahmin, the duties of a Brahmin will surround you. If you consider yourself to be just a manav – a simple human being – then you are surrounded by the kartavya of manavata – of humanity and humane

behavior. Wherever you seat your little 'I', it will be surrounded by the kartavya and prema of that identity.

If you lift your 'I' above parichhinata, above the feeling of separateness, you will feel one with the Atma of all. You will get the anubhav of karma, Yoga, and upasana. Therefore, the fact about an ordinary jeevan is that you should know what the kartavya is, for that, which you identify yourself with – a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra or manushya. The kartavya of a person depends on what he feels he is. So, know the kartavya that applies to you and carry it out, taking rasa in what you do. Understand, work and enjoy!

In this way, the rasa that is scattered in the sansara at present will be gathered up. It will become collected and concentrated, and you will begin to get the anubhav of Paramananda. However, if you spend your time in obtaining knowledge about worldly things and work for them, you use your energies for the things that cannot give enduring anand. It is your wish. There are millions of things to be known in this world – there is no end to worldly knowledge. You are free to enjoy whichever appeals to you.

The meaning of balance is that depending on your qualifications and eligibility, you understand about your karma, Gnan and anand, and lead your life accordingly. If you understand the word 'balance' to mean whose Gnan you should obtain, then obtain Gnan about your Ishtadev and do whatever your Gurudev and learned people and the Shastras tell you, to obtain Him.

And, when bhakti comes into your hriday by this method you will become a source of anand. In fact, you are an ocean of anand! What you say showers anand, what you see emits rays of anand. The vrittis that arise in your hriday are the purifying ripples of Gangaji. If you see the one who directs all these, you will get the darshan of the sakshat Ishwara.

The breeze flows with honey. The sweetness of honey flows in the rivers. Every particle of dust is filled with sweetness. If you understand your Gnan, karma and bhakti to be balanced, and live accordingly, you will not find anything in it that is called dukha.

Question: - We know something to be bad but still we do it. Why does this happen? How can we stop this from happening?

Answer: - Arjuna had asked this very question to Shri Krishna in the Gita.

Anichhannapi vaarshne`ya balaadiva niyojitah.

(Gita 3. 36)

(A manushya does paapa as though compelled, even if he doesn't want to.)

The thought, 'I should not do this' is in the mana, but still you do it. It is in your mana that you should not indulge in this bhoga but you can't restrain yourself from indulging in it. You say things that you know very well should not be said. What is the cause?

What happens is that we put kama in place of Rama. Some of these things are done by kama, and if kama is not satisfied it turns into krodha. Then, some of these things are done by the krodha that is a result of thwarted desire.

I have seen people bang their head against a wall because their wish was not fulfilled. People tear out their hair in frustration. When desire is not fulfilled it turns into anger, and when it is fulfilled it becomes lobha. The greed for 'more' is insatiable; and it is ever-present in the mana. Kamana's desire for worldly objects is never satisfied. It is '*mahaashano mahaapaapmaa*' – a terrible hunger leading to terrible paapas. It is Aghasura, the demon in the form of an enormous python who swallowed all the calves, cows, and gwaal-baal but remained unsatisfied.

Therefore, you must first understand the mystery of this and then take a niyam. Make a self-imposed rule for yourself. Only a person who controls the kama, krodha and lobha in his mana can overcome them. You should also make a niyam about your kamanas. For example, 'I will not eat more than three times a day.' 'I will eat these things but not those things.' 'I will look at these things but not at those things.'

In the same way, have some self-imposed rules for all your sense organs – ears, eyes, nose, tongue, etc. Decide which are the places you will walk to and where you will not go to, like gambling houses, hotels where people go to drink or womanize, etc. For this it is said:

*Indriyaani paraanyaahurindriye`bhyah param manah,
manastastu paraa buddhiry buddhe`h paratastu sah.*

(Gita 3. 42)

(The indriyas are said to be beyond the gross shareer. The mana is beyond the indriyas, the buddhi is beyond the mana, and the Atma is beyond even the buddhi.)

Observe that the vishays of the sansara that you get attached to are lower than the indriyas. Your mana is at a higher level than the indriyas, and your buddhi is higher than your mana. When your buddhi tells you that you will get sukha when you go to some place, you go there. When your buddhi tells you that you will get dukha if you go to some place, you don't go there.

Thus we see that first the desire comes into the mana – *jaanaati, ichhanti* - you know and then you want. First, you understand with your buddhi and then the desire to obtain it comes into your mana. So, understand first of all which things will benefit you, and which will harm you. Understand what you should do and what you should not do; what you should try to obtain and what you shouldn't even try to get.

After understanding all this properly, keep your indriyas under your control. So, '*indriyaani paraanyaahurindriye`bhyah param manah*' – who is it who stays behind the buddhi? It is the one who rules the buddhi.

*Tasmaatvamindriyaanyaadan niyamyah bharatarshabha,
paampaanam prajahiye`nam gnaanavignanaanaashanam.*

(Gita 3. 41)

(Therefore, O Arjuna! first gain control over your indriyas and then destroy the terrible paapi called Kama who destroys Gnan and vighnan.)

The first thing you have to do is to develop the capability to control your indriyas. Kama comes into the mana. Never mind; if you don't allow your desire to be fulfilled – don't affirm it with your buddhi – and don't let it come into your action, it can do you no harm.

If your buddhi supports you, kama cannot achieve anything, but if you allow your buddhi to leave you and you join your mana, your buddhi will be left standing on one side while your indriyas will do what they want. Therefore, stay with your buddhi. Don't side with your mana and indriyas. Give up this great paapi called 'kama'. The word 'prajahati' is not indicative of killing; it is indicative of giving up.

Don't go in the direction your kamana wants to drag you. Keep your indriyas with you; don't let them stray. Keep your mana with you; don't let it go to the vishays. And, see who the ruler of your buddhi is.

The starting point is not that the indriyas will come under your control when you get Bhagwan's darshan. When you gain control over your indriyas you will become antarmukha. You will become introspective when you are no longer subjugated by your indriyas. After that you will be able to see Bhagwan who is seated in your hriday. And when you see Bhagwan, kama will be destroyed.

'Yo buddhe` paratastu sah' – you will know the Paramatma who is beyond the buddhi. Then, *'jahi shatrum mahaabaaho kaamaroopam duraasadam'* – 'jahi' means, to kill. When will this enemy, kama, be killed? It will be killed when you get the darshan of the Paramatma.

That means, only when you keep your indriyas under control can you succeed in overcoming the temptation of the vishays, and give them up, and then you will know the Paramatma. And when you know the Paramatma, kama will die automatically, and the removal of kama is also the removal of krodha and lobha!

Therefore, when you use restraint and give up kama, and know the Paramatma, kama will stop coming near you. *'Jahi shatrum mahaabaaho kaamaroopam duraasadam'*.

This enemy, kama, is very difficult to defeat, capture and destroy. People go on talking about nishkama-nishkama, but dance in the snares of their kamanas. These days, people sit in their shops, cheating their customers, and say, 'we do business with a nishkama bhava'. They have no control over their indriyas – a baby is born every year, and they make the excuse, 'we are following the Grihastha Dharma with a nishkama bhava.' This is an illusion of what nishkama bhava actually is. Such talk may succeed in bluffing other people, but to delude yourself is absolutely wrong.

Think of it like this – the two grinding stones of kamana have something in-between. On the one side is the buddhi and on the other side is the karma-shakti. If we refuse to allow the buddhi to affirm the kamana that comes into our mana, the very foundation of kamana will be uprooted. If we refuse to succumb to the kamana, its very head will get chopped off!

That means, if we are sincere about wanting to cut away the roots of our desires we need a buddhi that is alert, and to cut off the head of kamana we need to refuse to act according to its demands. Then, the swarup of kamana will be seen like something seen in a dream. There is no need for us to do anything to fulfill the kamanas.

Just as our buddhi does not accept a desire seen in a dream, and we make no effort for its fulfillment, when some desire comes when we are awake we have the understanding that the fulfillment of that desire will lead to lobha, and the inability to fulfill it will lead to krodha. Then the whole web becomes like something seen in a dream. Then, with the help of your buddhi you won't allow your 'I' to join kama; you will refuse to submit to its allure.

Thus, the doshas of kama, krodha and lobha can be removed if you pray to Bhagwan every morning and night, and remain alert in your vyavhar. After that,

even if the doshas do come into your jeevan occasionally they will be removed gradually because of your vigilance and taking sharan in Bhagwan.

Bhagwan's poorna shakti is with you. You will be in a state of anand when you make an earnest effort to give up kama, krodha and lobha.

Question: - Bhagwan is an ocean of compassion, fully capable of anything; He can remove all the paapa-taapa of His bhaktas if He wants. Bhagwan can shower infinite prema into our jeevan, and yet He gives dukha to His bhaktas. Why?

Answer: - My brother, dukha can only be given to a bhakta. Even if dukha is given to an abhakta, it will become enmity. Dukha is given to a bhakta because of prema.

After all, Bhagwan sent Sitaji to Ravana's house, didn't He? Whenever, wherever, Bhagwan has occasion to give dukha, He thinks, 'this one is My own. He will endure the dukha and come back to Me when it is over.' Thus, my brother, Bhagwan gives dukha to His bhaktas.

Understand your conviction about this. A mother puts her little child in a tub of hot water and scrubs him with soap. The child cries. He thinks his mother is giving him dukha. However, is the mother actually giving him dukha by bathing him? No; she is washing away the dirt off his shareer. In the same way it is Bhagwan's karuna when He gives dukha to His bhaktas. His infinite prema for His bhaktas is there even at that time, even if a person does not understand it at that time; he realizes it later.

Only a person who is a true bhakta understands the depth of Bhagwan's prema and karuna that are present even in the dukha. A true bhakta loves even the dukha given by Bhagwan.

One day, Shri Radharani and Shri Krishna were snatching and scrabbling playfully. Shri Radharani's hand got scratched by Shri Krishna's nail and began to bleed a little, but Pyariji concealed it. Some days later Shri Krishna saw it and asked Shri Radharani how she got this cut. The scratch was absolutely fresh. She told Him, 'it

is something that reminds me of You all the time. I don't let it heal to keep the memory of that day fresh. I peel off the new skin that comes so that it remains fresh and so does my memory of how I got it from You.'

In the drishti of bhaktas dukha-sukha is different from what it is in the drishti of the people of this sansara. For bhaktas sukha is whatever reminds them of their Beloved. And dukha is whatever makes them forget Him. And then, my brother, when a person becomes a premi why should he be afraid of dukha?

Actually what is sukha-dukha? When our mana becomes sullied that is called dukha, and when it becomes bright and limpid it is called sukha. Don't let anything sully your mana. Keep it pure and bright all the time.

What is the cause of the mana becoming murky? It is when things don't go the way that is pleasing to your mana, isn't it? However, this is done by Bhagwan, so there is no need for you to be dukhi. Yes! If the dukha is because of not having prema for Him and not having His bhakti – that dukha is desirable. Let it come into everybody's jeevan! May all people be dukha for this reason and move towards Him. That will be excellent!

Bhagwan is an ocean of compassion. He showers endless prema – everybody has heard this. However, only when you get an anubhav of this will you begin to see Bhagwan's karuna in every grain, every moment, in jeevan and in maran, in the desert, forest, in distress and in prosperity. Then, this won't remain something you have heard about; you will actually experience how much sukha and anand there is in what the people of the world call dukha.

People are fearful of dukha. They want to avoid it at any price! However, there is a shloka in the Bhagwat –

Vipadah santu nah shashvat tatra-tatra jagadguro.

Kunti prays to Shri Krishna, 'He Prabhu! Let adversity and misfortune come to us wherever we go and wherever we stay.'

Shri Krishna asked her, 'Buaji, why do you ask for vipatti?'

Kunti said: *'Bhavato darshanam yatsyaadapunarbhavadarshanam.* Whenever vipatti comes, You come! You give us Your darshan. You saved us from getting burnt alive in the house of wax. You saved Draupadi from being disrobed publicly. You saved Bhimasena from poison. You protected us from the terrible weapons used against us in the Mahabharata war, and from Durvasa's shaap. You came at once and ate a scrap of food and we were saved! So, let such adversities come, because they bring You, and we get Your darshan again and again.'

Thus, my brother, the outlook of bhakti is a little different.

I will tell you about something else that is in the Bhagwat. Vritrasura tells Indra, 'I know the svabhava of my Master.' What do you know, my brother?

*Traivargikaayaasavidhaatamasnatpatividhatte` purushasya shakra,
tatoanume`yo bhagavatprasaadah sudarlabhoakinchanagocharoanyaih.*

When a person is not successful in worldly matters, in the fulfillment of his desires, or in Dharma, what should the person understand? Should he think that his Master is displeased with him? What is the problem?

A child is engrossed in playing with his toy. He refuses to let go of the toy and go to his mother, have his milk, and go to sleep. What does the mother do? She quietly removes the toy. The child cries for a while. The mother takes him onto her lap and holds him close. Tell me – is the mother unjust when she takes the toy away so that her child will have his milk and goes to sleep? The mother knows what her child needs even if the child doesn't.

Similarly, it is difficult to recognize Prabhu's kripa. A person who has raaga for the sansara cannot recognize it, but a person who has vairagya sees Bhagwan's hand in every situation sees Bhagwan's kripa in everything.

Prabhu's murtis is made of kripa. His hand showers kripa; He can do no amangala! That, which seems to us to be dukha also contains Bhagwan's kripa, and is mangal – only mangal!

Question: - Should a manushya depend on Bhagwan's kripa or on Purushartha?

Answer: - Tell me, when you say, 'we should depend on Bhagwan's kripa', is this kartavya or not? We should depend on Bhagwan's wish; this is our kartavya. It is our Gnan and our bhava. It is the all-in-all of our jeevan.

'We should depend on Bhagwan' is our kartavya. It is what we should do, and 'wish' is Bhagwan's kripa. We should depend on Bhagwan's wish, but how does that separate Purushartha from His wish? Bhagwan's wish and Purushartha are one!

Bhagwan abides in the hriday of all. Our buddhi works because of His presence, our mana works because of His presence, and so do our limbs and senses. You would have heard, any number of times, that not a leaf moves but at His will. Bhagwan has made this shareer and He sits inside it, and makes it move. He wants to get work done with this shareer.

One man said, 'Look, Ji, I don't make any effort to obtain Bhagwan. When He wants me – when He is unable to stay without me – He will come and meet me.' That means, the man has no longing to obtain Bhagwan.

'Paurusham nrishu' – Bhagwan stays in the form of paurush, in the shareer of a manushya. He has given you two such excellent hands to work with, and two legs that take you to good places. He gave you a tongue to say auspicious things with.

Regarding Bhagwan's wish, you should observe how He has wishes. For example, there is a loud-speaker in this hall. It magnifies what I speak so that the words reach your ears. This works on electricity. Without the electricity the loud-speaker would be of no use. When electricity comes into it, it becomes an instrument for amplifying sound.

When electricity comes into a bulb it becomes an instrument for spreading light. When it comes into a fan it creates a breeze, in a heater it spreads heat, and when it comes into an air-conditioner it cools the air. The machines are all separate, but the electricity that enables them to function is one.

It is the same with the different karmas of different people, with their different desires – they are like different machines. The antahkarana in them is different and so are the vasanas. Like electricity, Bhagwan's shakti is one. You would have seen that sparks fly when two wires touch, and a fire is created. There would be no fire if the wires did not rub against one another. In the same way, Bhagwan gives shakti to all, but conflict is created because of the difference in the people's minds.

The antahkarana is filled with vasanas of several previous births and a person's inner and outer machine is created according to those vasanas. Bhagwan's shakti is given to all, and each individual works according to his vasanas. So we should always be alert, and try to remain connected to the Ishwara.

Paurush is also given by the Ishwara, but we should use it where it is required. The vritti of our antahkarana should always be aware of Bhagwan's shakti, Gnan, and capability.

You say that you leave yourself in the hands of what Bhagwan wants – but are you truly doing this? If you observe yourself honestly you will see that you are not really giving yourself up to Bhagwan's wish; you are at the mercy of your own wishes! When you leave yourself in the hands of your own wishes you become responsible for yourself.

Therefore, take Bhagwan's ashray and do your kartavya, and try to obtain your *gnaatavya* – meaning, the Gnan you should obtain.

Question: - What is the difference between prema and bhakti?

Answer: - Look, my brother, differences are there when they are created. Prema-bhakti are also used together at times, and sometimes they are used as adjectives, like Premabhakti.

Do you get rasa in doing Bhagwan's bhajan, taking His naam, doing His smaran, chintan etc? If you get rasa in doing these it means there is prema for Bhagwan in

your hriday. You have bhakti for Bhagwan. However, if you get rasa in the smaran-chintan of the sansara, it means there is a paucity of bhakti in your hriday.

Regarding the Sampradayas and Panthas, it is a separate matter. They decide within their own group that Bhagwan has great aishwarya or great madhurya (sweetness). Some have prema for aishwarya and some have prema for madhurya. Even so, it is not that they are always logical! For instance, in Vrindavan the bhaktas say, 'we don't believe in aishwarya at all.'

Then what do you believe in, my brother?

'Madhurya'.

Very good; please tell me how many thousand years old are the creepers and shrubs in the Nitya-Nikunj, where Shri Radha-Krishna sat together?" Maharaj! This arbor is eternal! Why ask how many thousand years old it is?

Well, if an arbor with creepers and shrubs is eternal, isn't that aishwarya? This youth – Krishna, and this maiden – Radha – who sport with each other in the arbor – how old are they?

'You are asking the age of Shri-Radha-Krishna, Maharaj? They are nitya!'

Now, is their being nitya their aishwarya or their madhurya?

Well, now, what about the spittoon kept there? How old is it?

'Maharaj! What are you asking – this spittoon has been here since the time of Shri Radha-Krishna!'

Tell me, is it not aishwarya if the same spittoon remains there for thousands of years?

The fact is, if you let go of the Ishwara's aishwarya there is no prema. Therefore, the sweetness of your bhava for Bhagwan is attached to Bhagwan. Bhagwan remains Bhagwan, so this is called a kind of mano-vritti, and it is prema.

Another type of mano-vritti is called bhakti. When a person becomes so engrossed in Bhagwan's leela that he forgets that Bhagwan's ishwaratva and does Bhagwan's seva, it is called bhakti.

Thus, there is no fundamental difference in Bhagwan, in prema and in bhakti. The difference in the state of their bhava makes people call it what they feel it is, depending on their Pantha or Sampradaya.

Question: - What should our vyavhar be like?

Answer: - Your vyavhar! Who are you? Sacchidananda! Your vyavhar should be very sweet with everybody. If even your enemy comes to your house, you should stand up respectfully and greet him with a smile. Fold your hands politely and offer him the best chair in the room. You should offer food to him, even if it means going hungry yourself. No sign of animosity should be seen in you. Whatever vyavhar you do, take rasa in it. The sweetness of your hriday should remain unimpaired. Your vani should contain satya, gnan and anand, and your kriya should have satya, gnan and anand.

You fear death, don't you? The other person is likely to fear death as well. Reduce the fear of death in your mana and don't raise it in the mana of another. Continue to live and let others live. Don't be afraid and don't make others afraid. These are the four type of vyavhar.

Now, we need food in order to survive. We also need clothes, medicines, and a house, etc. You should be careful that you get the things you need for you to survive, and others get them as well.

Also, be alert to not fear death and don't put the fear of death in another's mana. Yes – if it is a matter of obtaining Bhagwan, or His bhakti, a little fear of death can be helpful in inducing you to do bhajan and good deeds; but doing bhajan because you are afraid of death is nothing very appreciable!

Very well; you don't like it when somebody makes a fool of you, so don't make a fool of anybody. Try to reduce foolishness. Increase your own knowledge and the

knowledge of others. Start a school if you have the means to do so. Organize Satsang, become knowledgeable, wise, prudent and understanding, and help others become the same. This is what your vyavhar should be like.

You don't want to be dukhi; don't make anybody dukhi. Don't be dukhi and don't cause dukha for any. Remain sukhi and help others to be sukhi. If you feel sukhi in doing Bhagwan's bhajan, that is very good. And if you feel sukhi when you get some worldly objects, dance, sing, play some instrument, getting wealth, jewelry or some other object, or a position of power – well, however many portion of sukha you create for yourself, try to remain sukhi and make others sukhi.

In vyavhar it is essential to not get mislead by friends into the creation of ill-will. Don't become a cause of ill-will for others.

These are the sixteen parts of vyavhar.

Don't fear death and don't instill the fear of death in others.

Live and let others live, help them to live.

Don't allow yourself to be fooled and don't fool anybody.

Be wise and help others to be wise.

Don't be dukhi and don't be a cause of dukha for anybody.

Remain sukhi and make others sukhi.

Live amicably and help others to live amicably.

Don't let anybody create strife for you and don't create strife for anybody.

These sixteen parts of vyavhar are of the Sat-Chit-Anand, of abheda – meaning, absence of separateness, non-duality. Keep these in mind and do vyavhar.

Question: - What is the principal sadhan for enduring ninda-stuti?

Answer: - Practice enduring stuti first. When somebody praises you, don't blow up like a balloon! Some people become conceited when they are praised, believing the praise to be well-deserved.

A gentleman used to stay with me many years ago. He was a very handsome man. His bhaktas would tell him, 'you are Bhagwan'. One day he asked me, 'do I really look like Bhagwan?'

I will tell you another incident about this same man. A group of us were walking from Karnavas to Haridwar. We stopped to rest in a public garden on the way. A group of children were playing there, calling out to each other by name. This gentleman called out to one of them by his name, since he'd just heard it. The boy came to him. 'Would you like to have some jaggery?' he asked the boy. (We had been given jaggery in bhiksha). The boy became confused when he heard himself addressed by his name. He ran off to the village.

A few minutes later he came back accompanied by a group of people, including an old woman and her daughter-in-law. The old woman told this gentleman, 'you are my son. I recognize you by these signs. You had left us and joined the Army. We were informed that you had been killed, but you are alive and you are my son!'

The daughter-in-law also told him, 'you are my husband. I recognize you!' They went on insisting and urging him to go back with them. They even threatened to call the police. The gentleman asked me, 'if you agree I will go and stay with them for a few days and then run away. The way they are after me, I don't know what else to do!'

I told him, 'look; as long as you deny being their son and husband, you are safe. The moment you accept you will be beaten up.'

Therefore, my brother, you have to be very alert when you are praised. The people who flatter you exaggerate greatly, and you become deluded.

Regarding ninda – it is very difficult to endure criticism or unjust blame. I will tell you of a sootra. If the person who is doing your ninda tells you about a dosha you

have, accept it. Acknowledge that you have this fault and will try to remove it. If what he says is not true, endure it silently. Enduring false blame increases your tapasya; your punya will increase.

There was a Swamiji. He went to Lucknow at the invitation of a bhakta. His in-laws (before he became a Monk) also lived in Lucknow. A relative of his wife came for the darshan of a Mahatma and recognized him as the man who had married his relative. He berated the Mahatma bitterly, going on and on about his doshas. The Swamiji listened to his tirade quietly. When the man stopped, the Swamiji said, 'I listened very attentively when you were telling me about my doshas. I know that I have all these doshas. I will try to remove them. However, you told me about the doshas I knew I had; you did not point out any dosha I am not aware of.'

The greatest tapasya is to endure. If you refuse to accept your doshas and make no effort to remove them – but become dukhi because they were pointed out – your becoming dukhi is absolutely futile. You should accept that you have these doshas and try to give them up.

If the person has a false impression of you, endure his criticism calmly. Within a few days it will become clear that the man is mistaken. This way, the tapasya of endurance will be of great benefit to you.

Regarding ninda-stuti, the Vedantis say that if somebody feels sukhi to see our faults and does our ninda, he does great kripa on us. The people of this sansara spend so much, and strive so hard to please people, flatter them and pamper them. Here, however, somebody is pleased by just seeing your doshas, and feels happy doing your ninda! Is this not a matter of great joy?

The Vedantis also say, 'if the person is doing ninda of your shareer – well, we also do ninda of the shareer and its doshas. If he does ninda of the Atma – well, his Atma and ours is one. He is doing ninda of his own Atma!'

Therefore, it is indeed very difficult to endure ninda-stuti; especially stuti, with equanimity. People are quick to accept praise, and develop pride and vanity. When they hear ninda they refuse to accept that it is justified, at first. Even if they do acknowledge that it is justified, they try to cover up their doshas.

We don't become dukhi because of our doshas; we become dukhi when they are pointed out to us. Actually, the presence of the doshas is the real cause of our dukha; not their being pointed out.

Nindaka niyare`raakhiye`aangana kutee chhavaaya,

binu paanee, binu saabune`nirmala kare`subhaaya.

(Keep your critics nearby, near your house, because they cleanse your svabhava without needing soap or water.)

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Question: - Is it Bhagwan's puja to serve mankind?

Answer: - You see, the rule that seva is puja is not proper. Bhagwan's puja is done in many forms, and there are many ways of doing His puja.

Fragrance is offered to Bhagwan in the form of incense, chandan, etc. Fragrance is the guna of the earth. When you apply chandan paste to Bhagwan's murti it means that this guna of the earth is gathered from all the sources of fragrance on this earth, and offered to Bhagwan in the form of chandan.

Jala – all kinds of sweet, sour, spicy, and salty rasas are offered to Bhagwan as bhoga. This becomes Bhagwan's puja.

All the forms of teja – the effulgence of the Tejas Tattva – the myriad of colors, brightness, the essence of all beauty etc is offered to Bhagwan when you worship His murti with a lamp.

The essence of all air – vayu – is offered to Bhagwan when you fan His murti. Ringing a bell is offering Bhagwan the essence of all sound.

All the jeevas belong to Bhagwan and so do all the things in this world. Therefore, to consider them to be His and filled with Him is also His puja.

To do puja of the Devtas, Sants, mother, husband, and daughter is also Bhagwan's puja. The daughter is a mother and so is the daughter-in-law. Paramhansa Ramakrishna did puja of his wife as a form of Bhagwan. Bhagwan's puja is done in the form of a fish, tortoise, boar, lion and horse. That means our Bhagwan is not only a manushya. He is all beings, all objects, every individual, everything! In puja the important thing is that we should have the bhava of doing Bhagwan's puja.

We do puja of the tulsi shrub, the peepal tree, leaves of a bel tree, Gangajal, the sea, and the cow. We do homa in agni and have the feeling that Bhagwan is in them all. Therefore, it is not proper to confine Bhagwan's puja to any one form of worship. Bhagwan's puja is to worship Him in every form.

The third canto of the Bhagwat states very clearly that serving mankind is also Bhagwan's puja. Bhagwan says, '*aham uchchaavachaidravyaih*' – anybody who shows disrespect to any being – I am not pleased with him even if he does My puja with great pomp, because it is I who abides in every being.'

Dvishantah parakaaye` maam bhaaninobhinnadarshinah,

Bhoota`shu baddhavairasya na manah shaantimrichchhati.

Bhagwan abides in the hriday of all beings. A person who feels enmity for anybody will never experience shanti because enmity and shanti can never stay in the same place. Shanti will never be present in a hriday that has enmity for anyone, and enmity will never be present in a hriday that is filled with shanti. Therefore –

Tasmaat sarve`shu bhoote`shu bhootaatmaanam kritaalayam.

Bhagwan sits in the form of all beings as their Atma, making each shareer a Mandir; and so you should do everybody's puja – meaning, respect all beings. The bhava of doing puja should be present in our hriday. If this bhava is there, whatever you do will be your puja and whatever you see will be your puja. However, if you choose some particular objects for doing puja, it will be puja, certainly, but it won't be poorna.

Ultimately, our goal is to reach a stage where we experience Bhagwan's presence in all beings. He is all, and He is the Atma, and nothing exists except the Atma – or Bhagwan! Since we have to come to this realization ultimately, puja done with this feeling is the true puja.

Arhaye`d daanamaanabhyaam – do daan, if you have the means. If you don't have the means to do daan, give respect. If you can't even give respect, have goodwill, and the drishti of abheda. Just as the Atma-Paramatma is in your shareer He is there in all shareers. If you have this viewpoint it become's Bhagwan's puja.

Samatvamaaraadhanamachyutasya – Prahlad said, ‘to see Bhagwan in all is Bhagwan’s aradhana.’ Therefore, do Bhagwan’s puja in all who are around you, every moment, in every grain and every brick.

Sa sarvavid bhajati maam sarvabhaave`na bhaarata – a person who recognizes Bhagwan does His aradhana with every bhava. Bhagwan is in every form – this is also one bhava. And all the bhavas that arise in our hriday should be used for His aradhana. Doing Bhagwan’s aradhana is doing the aradhana of all beings, just as watering the roots of a tree provides water to all parts of the tree.

Question: - My Ishtadev is Shri Krishna. I do His dhyana. My Guru-mantra is that of the nirakara. As soon as I start to do dhyana of the nirakara my mana slides into the sakara. Please do kripa and tell me what is best for me.

Answer: - It is not possible to see the nirakara without the sakara; the nirakara remains an imagined object. That is why a sadhak sees the sakara first.

For example, you see a bangle, it is sakara. You see a necklace and ear rings and they are also sakara. The akaras are different, but the gold they are made of is one. You will say that gold is also sakara. Well – what is gold? When the gold reveals its swarup before you, will it be in the form of a slab, as gold powder, or molten gold? These are forms; they are not the gold.

When you investigate the substance you won’t find gold as an object that is separate from your Atma. Gold is a nirakara Tattva. Just as gold is a nirakara Tattva, the nirakara Tattva can be Rama or Krishna or Shiva or Vishnu or your Guru. Whoever be the object of your dhyana, the matter it is made of is the nirakara. The more your drishti ripens the more you get darshan of your Ishtadev in all.

Therefore, there is no harm if you do japa of a nirakara mantra and do dhyana of your Ishtadev. Do dhyana lovingly and the nirakara will emerge in it.

The point is that all the things desired by your indriyas – shabda, sparsha, roop, rasa, gandha – show that you want a sweet voice to listen to, soft things to touch,

beauty to look at, tasty food, and fragrance to smell. We smile for them and weep for them. We become immersed in them. To fulfill the desires of our indriyas we first do chintan of Bhagwan's sakara roop. Then, inertness is gradually removed and the sakara adhishtana chetan manifests in the form of your Atma. That is why people who walk on the path of Bhagwan should not be afraid. Bhagwan Himself shows us the path for our progress.

The fact is that every person has to start his journey from the position in which he is. If somebody has fallen into a ditch he has to use his own hands to pull himself out of it, stand up, and then proceed in the direction he has chosen.

Our mana and indriyas are trapped in the naam-roop. We need a naam-roop to bring them out of the trap of the worldly naam-roop they are caught in.

Whose naam-roop do we need?

We need Bhagwan's naam-roop.

The nirakara stays in the sakara and the sakara in the nirakara. And so, if you do your sadhana according to your Guru's instructions your sakara will also become nirakara. If your bhava is very strong the nirakara will become sakara. Bhagwan has no problem in becoming either; nor does it take Him any time to change from one to the other! It is only a matter of your bhava. Whatever your bhava is what Bhagwan will be seen as.

Question: - What is the difference between bhakti and Gnan? Which is sugam?

Answer: - What am I to tell you, my brother, about sugam-agam? Whenever I tried to ride a cycle I fell off. So, I've not touched a cycle for the past sixty years or so. For me, it is very difficult to learn how to ride on a cycle. I see children riding a cycle with the utmost ease, sailing along, sometimes even without holding the handlebars. I see them do all kinds of tricks while riding. People have amazing skill in riding cycles. For them it is sugam.

Now – what is sugam and what is agam? It depends on what you bring into abhyas. By abhyas I don't mean pranayam, asana, or danda-kasrat. Abhyas means to do something regularly. That is what it means in Sanskrit; in Hindi the word used is '*doharaanaa*'. Whatever you do regularly becomes easy for you, but don't think you have cultivated a habit. A habit is formed by doing something for a few days and it is broken by not doing it for a few days.

In Bhakti-Gnan, nothing is sugam and nothing is agam.

What you have to see is whether you are a jignasu with a desire to know about Bhagwan, or whether you are a premi who wants to simply serve Bhagwan. Bhakti is sugam for a premi and Gnan is sugam for a jignasu.

The question is: what if the vastu is sugam-agam?

A person who has the abhyas of Vedanta is able to immediately talk about the prapanch made of the naam-roop-kriya even in general chit-chat. People who don't understand find it very difficult to follow. They keep wondering how the world can be so vast.

Everything is sugam and everything is agam. You should see where your drishti is. Is your hriday drawn to listening to Bhagwan's leela-katha and charitra or listening to the past, present and future? Both will be aparoksha. If I describe Gokul-dhaam, Nandababa's house, Yashoda Maiya churning the curd and giving fresh butter to her Lala, and His eating the butter, the white butter smeared on His dark face – the perception you will have will be aparoksha.

Therefore, regarding the experiencing of rasa the Naiyayik literature states that it is our mana that goes into the past. It goes into the past, goes to the paroksha, and starts to look at the vastu. Some people say that when leela is done, a person sees it and notices it. Some people say it is our imagination that shows it to the mana.

Even among the experts of literature the Naiyayiks are different. They say, 'Shri Krishna is dancing in our antahkarana. He is talking in our hriday, so it is our Atma that is Shri Krishna's Atma. Shri Krishna has not come with a separate Atma or a

separate chetan. The chetan that is not separate from our antahkarana becomes one with the chetan in the form of Shyamsundar, who is seen, and He dances, talks, plays and laughs.'

There is a bhakti that is paroksha; and, there is a bhakti in which the bhakta sees Bhagwan's leela; this is a pratyaksha bhakti.

One is the bhakti of the aparoksha Bhagwan in the hriday, and one is the bhakti that a bhakta has when the chetan that is not separate from the chetan of the subject of his meditation.

The fact is that the chaitanya in the antahkarana of the bhakta is also in the Bhagwan seen in the antahkarana.

Regarding sugam-agam, it depends on the state of your mana. Does your shareer thrill at the sound of Bhagwan's naam, and the sight of His leelas? Do tears of prema come into your eyes, and your throat become choked with prema, and your hriday call out to Him with prema? If so, bhakti is sugam for you.

If you remain unmoved by the sound of Bhagwan's name and the descriptions of His leelas, that is a different matter. Even in the hard-heartedness you have to remove the vishay-akara vrittis. You can burn them in fire or dissolve them in water. Meaning, if your mana does not soften by Bhagwan's naam, leelas, katha etc you should proceed on the path of Tattvagnan. That will be sugam for you. The path of Gnan is easy for a person whose hriday remains unmoved at the thought of Bhagwan. The path of bhakti is sugam for a soft-hearted person who has prema for Bhagwan.

Actually, there is no difference between Bhakti and Gnan, but bhakti is suited for one type of hriday and Gnan to another. It depends on the condition of our hriday, the eligibility of the Individual. If you want to obtain the nirakara, associate with the Mahatmas who do vichar and dhyana on the nirakara. Gnan will become sugam. If you want to get bhakti for Bhagwan, associate with those who have bhakti. When a person has bhakti his shareer emits such waves of air that those who come to him are filled with anand.

Thus, Bhakti and Gnan are both sugam and agam. They are sugam for a person who is eligible, and agam for a person who isn't eligible. A person who has a sanskara of Gnan – whether it is of this birth or previous births – is quick to grasp Gnan. A person who has the sanskara of bhakti is quick to respond to talks of bhakti. That is why it is said that the sadhana should be at one's own level; it ensures rapid progress. If you start to do sadhan elated by false praise you will not progress; you will fall. So, start your sadhan according to what you are qualified for. In this, even if you fall you should get up and start afresh with prema. Everything will become sugam for you gradually. And –

Kahahu bhagati-patha kavana prayaasa,

joga na japa tapa makha upavaasa.

(The path of Bhakti is effortless. There is no need to do Yoga, japa, tapa, Yagnas or fasting.)

You should at least, start on this path. If you have a wish to meet Bhagwan, why do you fear a difficult sadhan? Be prepared to undertake a sadhan that is not easy. You want Bhagwan but want to avoid discomfort? The goal is so great – you want to gain a billion and fear to spend ten lakhs? Nothing is difficult!

So, see the state of your hriday and progress on the path as directed by your Guru.

Question: - When I do bhajan, I am overcome with lethargy and drowsiness. Please do kripa and tell me of a method for preventing this.

Answer: - I don't know who the gentleman is who has asked this question. I ask him a counter-question. 'If you were given a few bundles of notes and asked to count them at night, would lethargy and drowsiness?' They won't trouble you in the least! And, I ask you, 'if you are waiting for a loved one you haven't seen for a long time will you feel at all sleepy?' No! You won't be able to sleep even if you lie down on your bed and close your eyes. Even sleeping pills won't work.

That means, drowsiness and lethargy and forgetfulness do not come if you have prema for the person; they don't bother a premi.

You would surely have heard this song –

Sakhee mori neenda nasaani ho,

piyaa ko pantha nihaarata sagaree raina bihaani ho.

‘O my friend, my sleep was destroyed because I kept watching the path my Beloved would come by.’

Those who await the coming of their Beloved pass their nights counting the stars. It is also given in the Bhagwat – Shri Krishna told the Brahmin who brought Rukmini's message to Him, ‘Punditji, I lie awake all night thinking of Rukmini.’

Tayaahamapi tachchitto nidraam cha na labhe` nishi.

Shri Krishna couldn't get sleep at night, thinking of Rukmini.

Now, just think – your feeling sleepy means that you don't have prema for Bhagwan. A person cannot fall asleep if he is troubled by thirst. His throat becomes more parched, and he feels uneasy and unwell. Increase your thirst for Bhagwan, then, you won't feel sleepy either!

When you have prema for someone your sleep vanishes when you think of him, do some work for him, do his seva, or do his bhajan. You don't feel sleepy when you are counting your profits, playing cards, gambling, and chatting with your friends in the Club. Music lovers listen to all-night music conferences without a trace of sleepiness.

I have a friend who loves music. I have known him for over forty years now. His niyam is to wake up at four o'clock in the morning, before sunrise, take his bath and then do the daily rituals like Sandhya Vandan. Whenever there is an all-night music program he attends it, comes back in the morning and goes for his bath. Then he does his daily rituals, has something to eat and takes a nap. His enjoyment of the music program is never hampered by sleepiness.

Therefore, my brother, measure your prema. Your sleepiness lets out the secret that there is some lacking in your prema for Bhagwan. Your lethargy shows that your mana is attracted to other activities, not bhajan. For this, you should lament and feel remorse, and pray to Bhagwan.

I cannot suggest that you do what I used to do when I was doing japa and felt sleepy. I would twist my ear so hard that the pain drove all sleep away for a while. If sleepiness returned I would slap myself very hard, and the sleep vanished.

There was a Mahatma called Narayana Swami in Rishikesh. I have had his darshan. He kept a choti. He did not sleep at night; he spent the night standing and praying. He tied a string to his choti and tied the other end of the string to a hook in the ceiling. Whenever his head drooped due to sleepiness, it would be jerked up, as if Bhagwan was telling him, 'why are you falling asleep?' Well, you can drive sleep away by getting up and walking about a little, wash your face, hands and feet, drink a little water, put some pepper in your mouth, etc. These are methods to drive sleep away.

However, if you don't want to use these methods, go and lie down for fifteen or twenty minutes. You will begin to feel remorse. 'Oh, I dozed and my bhajan was neglected.' The remorse will make you get up and go to do bhajan with great prema.

You should pray every day to Bhagwan that sleep does not trouble you when you are doing bhajan. Then, you won't feel sleepy. If you feel sleepy in spite of this, weep! Sleep does not come when you cry!

*Aaye` more` sajanaa, fira gaye` anganaa,
mein bauree rahee soyaree.*

(My Beloved came and went away because I was sleeping. How foolish I was!)

Sleep will leave if you regret wholeheartedly. This regret will help you to obtain the Paramatma.

Question: - Have you ever had prema for anybody?

Answer: -This is an interesting question! If the person asking this would come before me, I would show him what kind of prema I have had.

Look, my brother, regarding my prema – I had prema for my mother, sister, wife, children, friends, and also for food! However, by Ishwara-kripa, He made them all move away and came, Himself, to sit in my hriday, and He won't budge! What am I to do?

To tell you the truth I don't know about prema-aprema. I have prema for the manushya and for the clouds. I have also gone into isolation, in the Himalaya and by locking myself in my room. I have seen that after a few days I feel the need for human association. This is in spite of my getting my needs of food, water, medicine and getting seva.

Na manushyaat shre`thataram hi kinchit – no being is superior to the human being. I have examined the matter seen that my mano-vritti has a natural inclination for human beings. Sakshat Bhagwan is there, in the form of the manushya – *Vaasude`va sarvamiti sa mahatma sudurlabhah* – Bhagwan is present in all forms. *Sarva sarvagata sarva uraalaya* – it is not that Bhagwan is present in any one form or any one name. It is not that He does only one action or stays in one place only. Unlike us, He does not get a hut made for Himself and stay in it. Bhagwan is not there in any one time – He is always there. He is now. And, He is everywhere, meaning He is also here. He is in all forms, meaning He is also in you. Bhagwan and 'I' are not separate.

Question: - How does one get a Guru? What effort do we have to make to get a Guru?

Answer: - A person who wants to be a lawyer goes to a senior lawyer and a man who wants to be a doctor goes to a senior doctor to learn their profession. You should give up your abhiman. Give less importance to your own opinions and go to a person who is knowledgeable about the things you want to know.

To get a Guru it is necessary to slacken your preconceived ideas. If your Guru explains to you that your ideas are mistaken you should accept what he tells you. Apart from the one, advitiya Paramatma, the one akhand-Gnan husband of Sita, all Gnan has some agnan mixed in it. As long as you remain stuck to your own ideas and convictions, the abhiman of being right will remain in you. As long as you have some insistence about the akara, vikar, prakar and sanskara being what you believe them to be, there is no need for you to go to any Guru.

When you want to hold on to your own ideas in your jeevan, what is the need of a Guru? It is no use going to a Guru if you want to cling to what your buddhi tells you is right. Only if you have a genuine desire to become free of the akara, vikar, prakar and sanskara you have at present – and if you have vishvas that your Guru has the anubhav of the actual Paramartha – should you go to your Guru.

If there is some dilemma in your mana, or some doubt that confuses you, go to your Guru and get it resolved. There are Gurus who have met the sakshat Paramatma. They know that there is not even a moment's delay in meeting Him. The Paramatma is not hidden anywhere; He is like a mountain hidden behind a sesame seed!

Many disciples come to me. They tell me, 'Maharaj, please tell us about the intricacies of Vedanta. You are an authority on Vedanta. However, please don't talk about politics because we understand politics better than you do.' That means, I have one Gnan and they have one Gnan; we both become people whose Gnan is incomplete!

Guru-prapti – meaning, obtaining a Guru – is called prapatti. Prapatti means, to go to the Guru to get teaching about improving your jeevan. This does not mean going to the shareer of the Guru, not going with bhava or vikar. It means to try and reach the place of the Guru's Atma-vritti. This is the method of Guru-prapti. It is Guru-prapatti.

Question: - If a shishya becomes very close to his Guru but finds some things in his achara-vichar that he cannot agree with, how can he do samarpan fully?

Answer: - It is possible that the achara-vichar of the Guru are the correct ones. As long as the duality of the sansara troubles you, your vivek is incomplete. Therefore, you need a Guru who is beyond the limitations of achara-vichar, and he has the capacity to make you free of them.

Don't weigh your Guru's achara-vichar; just see how the people of this sansara suffer and die bound by achara-vichar. It is to release them from mrityu that your Guru disdains achara-vichar, and manifests the extraordinary sukha of Jeevanmukti.

Do achara-vichar come from book? The place that is the origin of books being written is filled with the Guru's Atma. The one you consider to be your Guru – his achara-vichar are there to give you a very lofty teaching. Just rise above your own level of thinking, and see!

The vikar of your mana is not a vikar of your Guru's mana. Your Guru is not bound by his sanskaras the way you are. The prakars that you are caught up in are not your Guru's prakars. You have kept a small touchstone of your own, but there is no Gnan of the Tattva in it. You have not had Bhagwan's sakshatkara; nor have you experienced Samadhi. Your touchstone is incompetent, and you want to use it to test your Guruji with it?

My brother, you should not hold on to great stupidity! If you are so firm in your achara-vichar that they go contrary to your Guruji's, you should let go of them. Guruji does not come to catch you! Don't be afraid. But keep in mind that by holding on to your preconceived ideas you will have to make many Gurus who will follow your ideas, who will actually be your followers, not Gurus~

Mould your achara-vichar according to your Guru's upadesh, whether your Guru is still in this world or not. The gurutva of the Guru is the gurutva of Bhagwan. His vichars are about Bhagwan and they will release you from the bandhan of this sansara. The Guru is one who takes you to a place that is beyond achara-vichar, sanskara and prakar; where you will be free from these bondages. Give all respect to your Guru!

A Guru is not one who stays within the boundaries of what you believe to be right and proper. He is one within whose maryada you should try to live. If you want him to be confined to your ideas he won't be your Guru at all; he will be your disciple.

Question: - What is the extraordinary sukha of Jeevanmukti?

Answer: - First, understand Jeevanmukti; then you won't need to ask.

The Vedantis narrate a story about two girls. They lived in the same village and were fast friends. One of them got married and went to live in her husband's village. When she came back on a visit, the unmarried girl asked her, 'tell me, my friend, is there some special sukha when you get married?' How could the married girl explain the pleasures of marriage to an unmarried girl?

In the same way, the sukha of Jeevanmukti is such that no restraints of caste, the Shastras, Dharma, the Ishwara, etc remain; otherwise, '*anyoasaavanyoahamiti pashure`va sa de`vaanaam*' – the sukha of Jeevanmukti is to be supremely independent.

You may have heard that Shri Gauri-Shankar Bhagwan were going somewhere one day. On the way they met the Sanatkumars, playing like little children. They were engrossed in their game and did not bow down to Bhagwan Shiva-Parwati. Gauriji was displeased that they did not show her husband due respect. She gave them a shaap. 'Become camels.'

The Sanatkumars turned into camels. Some days passed. Then Gauriji thought, 'I should go and see how the Sanatkumars are.' She told Shivaji, 'come; let us go and see the Sanatkumars.' They went and saw the four Sanatkumars sitting under a tree in the forms of camels, chewing cud.

'How are you, Betas?' asked Gauriji.

The Sanatkumars told her, 'we are very well. Earlier we had to take a bath every day; now we are free of this task. We used to go to get bhiksha to get food, now

we just stand under a tree and take as much as we like, and eat standing and defecate standing. We don't need water to wash ourselves. We don't need to bother about a janeu, or rituals like the Sandhya Vandan. Mataji, you did us a great favor by giving us this shaap and making us camels. You gave us the sukha of Jeevanmukti!'

When I was young I studied the Gita to understand Bhagwan's message for different beings. I would think, 'suppose I was a camel and Bhagwan is giving me this upadesh - *svadharme`nidhanam shre`yah paradharmo bhayaavah* – it is better to die doing your Dharma than do the things that are the Dharma for another. To follow another's Dharma is a cause of great fear. Just carry on carrying your burden, stay naked happily, eat and walk around.' At times I also thought, 'I am sakshat Vasishtha. I am giving upadesh to Shri Ramachandra. I have to do my duties as the priest of this lineage, and make sure that Dashrathji doesn't face any hindrance in the Karma-Kaanda he undertakes.'

The total freedom of a Jeevanmukta releases him from all kinds of pashutva; means being subservient in any way. This complete lack of bondage is called the extraordinary sukha of Jeevanmukti. This sukha is the sukha of supreme independence.

Svaatantryaat param sukham – Independence is the greatest sukha.

Question: - Which is superior – the Gnan-marg of Uddhavaji or the Bhakti-marg of the gopis?

Answer: - What are you yourself – Uddhavaji or a gopi? Uddhavaji's Gnan-marg is superior and so is the prema-marg of the gopis.

The fact is that it is not the marg that is superior or inferior; those who walk on the marg are at higher or lower levels.

Was Uddhavaji a Gnani when he went to Vraja? Poets have ridiculed him mercilessly! According to the Bhagwat Uddhavaji got Gnan when he took Shri

Krishna's sharan just before Bhagwan left this earth. (Bhagwan gave Tattvagnan to Uddhavaji in seven shlokas.)

From this we understand that when Uddhavaji came to Vraja he was not a Gnani. He had the abhiman of being very learned. 'I am a great vidvan. I am a student of Vrihaspati and a Minister in the Court of the Yaduvanshis. Even Shri Krishna consults me at times' etc.

When Uddhavaji came among the gopis his abhiman was shattered when he saw their prema for Shri Krishna.

So, if you mean to compare Uddhavaji's Gnan-marg to the gopis' prema-marg, please remember that Uddhavaji became a Gnani only after Shri Krishna gave him Tattvagnan at the Prabhas Kshetra (or Dwarka; both are given in the Shastras) just before leaving this earth.

Question: - What is the difference between the Sattvik shraddha bhakti and the Navadha-Bhakti?

Answer: - The Navadha Bhakti means the nine types of inclinations that show that a person has bhakti. These are shravan, kirtan, smaran, padasevan, archanam, vandanam, dasyam, sakhyam and Atma-nivedanam. They are all Sattvik forms of bhakti. Where Bhagwan is the only vishay it is nirguna bhakti, and everything else that is done – like shravan, manan, nididhyasana, etc is Sattvik; and with the upsurge of Sattvaguna, the person experiences sukha. Had it not been so, the person would not find it enjoyable.

About Bhagwan – the bhagavad-akara vritti is totally nirguna. In this there is no need of the prapanch for any activity.

So, don't try to think from before what is Sattvik, what is Rajasik and what is Tamasik. Just try to attach your mana, shareer and karmas to Bhagwan. This way, you will become like Bhagwan.

The dirty water of the drains is emptied into the Gangaji, but the Gangaji does not become a dirty drain; the dirty water becomes Gangaji. Similarly, connect yourself

to Bhagwan, whether you are Sattvik, Rajasik or Tamasik. When you attach yourself to Bhagwan He will first give you a thorough cleansing. He will remove all your impurities and make you fit to be held close. Then He will clasp you in a loving embrace. He will do everything, but at least make a start to get attached to Him!

Question: - Please do kripa and explain the Karma Yoga as given in the Gita.

Answer: - why don't you read the Gita and understand this for yourself? How can I explain the whole Gita to you?

When a person does something, he generally has the abhiman of being the karta. He feels, 'I am doing this.' There is also the vasana, 'if I succeed I will enjoy the fruit.' Generally, the feeling 'I will do', 'I am doing', and 'I have done' are present in the mana of the person.

Why are you doing this karma, my brother?

'I am doing it to obtain something I want.'

You do karmas to obtain something you don't have. In this, one factor is the bhava of being the karta, another factor is the karma itself, the third factor is the vasana for the fruit of the karma, and the fourth factor is the fruit of the karma. If you get the fruit you become the bhokta of the fruit. This is the swarup of karmas done by most people.

In nishkama karma the first point is that vasana is loosened. Nishkama karma means, work that is free of selfish motives.

Very good!

Now, think about this – a man lounges around doing nothing. He is in a state of Tamoguna, filled with dullness, sleep and stupor. The Shastras, Sants and Satpurushas wake him up saying, 'my brother, it is not proper to be idle like this. Do some work.' When the man got up he began to do all kinds of bad things like stealing, gambling and drinking.

Then the Shastras, Sants and Satpurushas told him, ‘my son, these are bad things; they make a person inert. Don’t do bad things. The greater the zeal for inert objects the more inert the karta becomes. Therefore, do karmas that the Shastras have instituted for you, which are appropriate for your ‘I’ to do.’

Drink corrupts the buddhi. The person loses his senses. That means, drink is something that takes you to a state of inertness and makes it rotten. You become mentally and physically lethargic and forget what you should do. Don’t do the karmas that are forbidden.

These Shastras of ours are a book of the laws made by Bhagwan. When we do things that are contrary to these rules, we do things that are against the law. When a person stops doing things that are wrong, and does the things the Shastras approve of there are two points in it.

Do you work for the fulfillment of some selfish desire or do you work unselfishly?

Nishkama karma has no kamana in it. This is called Karma Yoga.

Therefore, my brother, when you say ‘nishkama-nishkama’ do you say it with a full and proper understanding of the term or do you say it without grasping its meaning? If we say ‘nishkama’ with a full understanding we are talking about something very lofty. Nishkama karma is not some insignificant gesture!

A wish to get what is just one step away is also a wish. A wish to get something you will get within the next moment is also a gift. That means, any wish for any object – except your own self – is a wish. So please understand the meaning of nishkama karma. The books commonly available in the market do not explain this in depth. You have to understand from the Sants and the Shastras.

Start to do nishkama karmas with a lofty kamana. Carry out your kartavya. Do seva of your mother, father, Sant and Bhagwan. To do something for the sake of doing your duty, without any thought of a worldly gain, is the foundation of nishkama karma.

- (i) Work done only for the sake of doing your duty.
- (ii) Work done for antahkarana-shuddi.

- (iii) Work done to awaken jignasa for the Satya in your hriday.
- (iv) Work done for obtaining the sakshat Tattvagnan.

Nishkama is the highest kamana.

That means, work to obtain Bhagwan, work to get prema for Him, work to purify your antahkarana and work to obtain Gnan. All these are nishkama karmas.

Now, you have to be alert when you do karmas – you should not get attached to the karma. That means, you should not develop karma-asakti. To want to do a particular karma is karmasakti.

There is karma-asakti and there is fala-asakti. Falasakti means to be attached to the fruit of the karma. Kartriva-asakti is to be attached to some karma and refuse to do other karmas.

The karmas keep changing, but the subtle ego of being the karta – the bhava of kartapan – gets stronger. After this there is the akartriva. People hear somewhere that the Atma is akarta and abhokta. They become obstinate and refuse to do any karma, saying, 'I am the akarta.' This is being foolish.

When a person gets Tattvagnan he no longer has the subtle pride of kartapan and bhoktapan. He rises about the feeling of being the karta and the bhokta, a paapi and a punyatma, sukhi and dukhi. To have the feeling, 'I am a particle in the ocean that is the Ishwara' is to turn the Paramatma into millions of particles! Is the Paramatma a group of particles? No! The Paramatma is one. It is agnan to imagine fragmentation in Him. It is a false understanding, mere imagination!

So – where does Karma Yoga begin? It begins by giving up your dullness of mind, lethargy, and forgetting your duty. And, it concluded by uniting you with the Paramatma.

Thus, we see that Karma Yoga is not a trifling matter! It is not that you take up a mala in your hand, don your unwashed clothes, leave your hair uncombed and declare, 'I am a Karma Yogi.' That is not what a Karma Yogi is like! Karma Yoga has inner and outer cleanliness; there is no impurity in it. All that is impure in the

sansara is washed away in Karma Yoga. All impurities are burnt up in it. The Atma becomes shuddha and eligible for merging into the Paramatma.

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Question: - Please do kripa and explain the difference between vivek and Gnan; and also, which of them can enable us to obtain Bhagwan.

Answer: - People give different definitions of vivek and Gnan depending on their own Sampradayas. Shri Ramanuja Acharyaji Maharaj's Sampradaya considers vivek to mean discrimination in food. According to them a bhakta of Bhagwan does vivek about the shuddhi of food before eating it, eating only the food that is shuddha as defined by their Acharya. The criteria of shuddhi are that the item should be shuddha by nature – it should not be nishiddha. The place it is cooked in and the utensils used should also be shuddha. It should be bought with money earned honestly, and the item should not be harmful for the health of the one who eats. This is vivek according to the followers of the Ramanujacharya Sampradaya.

The Shankar Sampradaya believes vivek to mean discriminating between the nitya-anitya vastu, the vivek of the sat-asat. The basic point is that your 'I' remains one, and the train of loved ones comes and goes away.

One point is the transient objects that come and go in your jeevan. One point is the 'you' who sees them. The Atma is nitya and all other things are anitya. When you start to let go of the things that are anitya, and continue to experience the nitya, your vivek will be fully realized.

Vivek means vairagya. If it is correct, give up asat karmas, asat bhoga, asat bhava and asat vichar. If you go on understanding the anitya and asatya, and giving them up, your vivek will be nurtured. It will become strong. On the other hand, if you cling to the things you know full well to be asat and anitya, your vivek will shrivel and you will become a total bhogi.

Thus, vivek means that you examine all things, and let go of the things that seem anitya to you. You have probably heard this poem by Goswami Tulsidasji:

Tulasidasa hari guru karunaa binu vimala vive`ka na hoyi,

binu vive`ka sansaara ghora-nadee paara na paaya koyee.

(Tulsidas says that it is only with the compassion of Bhagwan Hari and the Guru that a person can get pure vivek. Nobody can cross over the deep river called the sansara if he does not have vivek.)

Thus, it is only when a manushya gets the Grace of Bhagwan and his Guru that he starts going to his Guru and does Bhagwan's dhyana, and obtains unsullied vivek. Vivek becomes sullied when we know something to be impure but are not able to give it up. When we get the kripa of Bhagwan and our Guru, a strong vivek arises, enabling us to give up what we understand to be harmful.

But when will that happen?

It will happen when we start to get a little rasa – a little anand – in Bhagwan. It is not enough to point out the doshas of objects that are harmful and how they lead to dukha. It is only when we get something we like in exchange that we can give up these other things.

I remember being given jaggery when I was a child. I would think that this is excellent. I would go to where the jaggery was being prepared to get fresh jaggery to eat. Later I got so much of other sweetmeats like rasagulla, chumchum, gulab jambun etc that jaggery no longer tempted me.

With Bhagwan, if once you get a little bhagavad-rasa your vivek will be successful. Then you will like only Bhagwan and nothing else.

Jau mohi raama laagate` meethe`,

to shatarasa, navarasa, anarasa rasa hoye jaate` saba feeke`.

(Once I got the rasa of Rama, all the other well-known rasas, like the six tyoes and nine types of rasas became tasteless.)

So, vivek arises in a manushya by doing Bhagwan's bhajan and seva of the Guru. Vivek arises in a manushya. Vimal vivek means vivek that has the strength to give up the things you know to be bad, and catch the things you know to be good. Until vivek arises in your hriday –

Binu vive`ka sansaara ghora nadee paara na paavai koyee.

Nobody can cross over this sansara, which is like a deep river, unless he has vivek.

In Sanskrit, the word ‘vivek’ means to separate two or more things that have got mixed. When grains of rice and dal get mixed people spread them out in large plates and separate the grains. Bhagwan is separate and this sansara is separate. When a person gets vivek bhakti for Bhagwan comes into his hriday, and the person learns the righteous methods for saving himself from the darkness called the sansara, which is like a raging fire.

Therefore, just as you use your wisdom to separate your friends from your foes in this sansara, and you know that your possessions are separate from the possessions of others, you should get the shakti to recognize the sat from the asat.

Raghupati bhagati baari chhaalita chita, binu prayaasa hee soojhe`.

If you wash your chitta with the water of Bhagwan’s bhakti everything will come to your mind effortlessly and timely, about what is what.

Thus, vivek means to separate two or more things that have become mixed.

Aananda-sindhu madhya tava baasaa, binu jaanai too marata piyaasaa.

(You are living in the middle of an ocean of anand but you are dying of thirst because you don’t know it.)

Bhagwan is Gnan-swarup. He is anand-swarup. Mrityu can never touch Him. Old age can never approach Him. He is always in our hriday in the form of our ‘I’; we can never be separated from Him. The anand of that Bhagwan will manifest in your jeevan, and you will get this Gnan.

Gnan and anand are not actually two separate things. It is another matter when people have raaga in this sansara, and a person’s raaga for somebody his anand is placed in that person. However, for a person whose chitta has vairagya – his anand is in his Gnan-swarup Atma.

Thus, one is the vivek of the Paramatma and the sansara, and the Gnan that the Paramatma is anand-swarup. The person has bhakti and anubhav. And one is the knowledge that anand is Gnan; it is our Atma. No anand is greater than that of our Atma, which is sanmatra, chinmatra and anandmatra – pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss!

Therefore, my brother, to separate the Paramatma from the sansara, and see them as being separate, is vivek. And, to separate our Atma from the sansara is also called vivek.

And Gnan is to know that our Atma is the swarup of the Paramatma, without the divisions of space and time. Or else, Gnan is that Shri Hari Bhagwan is Gnan-swarup, anadi-swarup and anant-swarup.

What is considered Gnan in this sansara is different, and the Gnan about the Paramatma is different. When you get Gnan about some other object, there remains the effort for obtaining it. Know – do – get. But when you get Gnan about your Self, of your nitya shuddha-buddha-mukta roop, nothing further remains to be done, to get or to know. This is the path of Atma-Gnan.

Question: - Is it essential for a manushya to make a Guru in order to obtain the sukha and shanti of the Atma?

Answer: - Elder brother! When you feel no need, why do you get involved in this subject? Yes – when a voice calls out from within that you need to get a Guru, you can get one for yourself!

Where is your satisfaction? If you felt satisfied in not having any need for a Guru, this question would not have arisen.

It is not easy to make a Guru. He is a person who will tell you about a mantra, about doing japa – which starts you on your spiritual journey. You have to do Satsang and understand what a Guru is, what a shishya is, and what the relationship between them is. This must be understood properly first. After all, a husband and wife get married! Which of them are born at the same time or

always stay together? They come from different places, meet, spend some time together, and then a relationship of deep love develops, and they are ready to die for one another.

The relationship of a Guru-shishya is no less weighty; it is even deeper – far deeper! Just as it is difficult to fulfill the relationship of a husband and wife, it is difficult to fulfill the relationship of a Guru-shishya.

Therefore, so long as you don't yourself feel the need for a Guru, what will it achieve if somebody tells you about the Guru? And if you see it from this angle, the need is only that you are asking whether there is any need for you to make a Guru!

It is likely that somewhere or other, the thought has pricked your chitta – perhaps prodded by some unknown sanskara – that there is something you want to ask, to know about, to be something, and have a question in your mana about the swarup of something. You should make the effort to ask somebody who is competent to tell you what you want to know.

Question: - 'A Sant is the swarup of Bhagwan, and Guru-Maharaj lives in a Sant.' Please explain what that means.

Answer: - Look, my brother, there are thousands of Sants, maybe even hundreds of thousands. Bhagwan is sanmatra – who is He not manifest in?

However, the difference between the Guru and other Sants is that just as there are any number of round stones lying in the bed of the Gandaki river at its source, and you choose one, and bring it home; you step on many of the stones as you look. You pick up some and balance them in your hand before choosing the one you want. All the shilas in the Gandaki are Shaligrams but you choose one, bring it home, and worship it.

In the same way, the Sants are many. To choose one for your puja is called making a Guru.

All men are men, but a woman gets married to one and he becomes her husband. The relationship with the Guru is such that it is through him that we meet Bhagwan.

There was a gentleman. He was very simple-minded and very sincere. He kept bothering a Punditji, 'please give me diksha. Make me have Bhagwan's darshan.' The man went to the Punditji every day, begging to be given diksha. The Punditji was fed up and irritated. One day he told one name of Bhagwan to the man. 'Keep chanting this name,' he said.

The man went home happy and satisfied. The next day he went back to the Punditji. 'What dhyana should I do?' he asked. 'What is Bhagwan like?'

Punditji was most irritated because he had thought he'd got rid of this daily pest! 'Bhagwan is like a goat!' he said angrily. The man went home and began to do dhyana of Bhagwan in the form of a goat. His devotion, his nishtha and his obedience to his Guru pleased Bhagwan. Bhagwan manifested before him. 'My brother, look – I, whose dhyana you have been doing so lovingly, have come. I stand before you in My four-armed form, with My Shankha, Chakra Gada and Padma in My hands. I have a pitamber round My shoulders.'

The gentleman told Bhagwan, 'my Guruji told me that Bhagwan looks like a goat. You are not like a goat. How can I believe you are Bhagwan?'

This was a new challenge for Bhagwan!

Bhagwan said, 'very well; I will turn into a goat for you. You look at the goat and do My dhyana.' Bhagwan turned into a goat before the man's eyes, and began to talk to him.

Then the gentleman said, 'it seems to me that you are an actor; a fraud! You appear as a man and change into a goat. How can I know whether you are actually Bhagwan? Come with me to my Guru. If he tells me you are Bhagwan I will believe it.'

'All right; come.'

‘Not like that!’ said the man. ‘You may run away if we walk side by side. Then my Guruji will think I am a liar. I will catch you ear as we walk, to make sure you don’t run away.’

‘As you wish,’ said Bhagwan, highly amused.

They went to the Guruji’s house, with the man holding the ear of goat-Bhagwan. ‘Guruji!’ he called. ‘Just see, is this Bhagwan or not?’

Guruji was completely flabbergasted! ‘I had told him out of irritation, and he accepted it as the truth!’ he thought.

‘Speak now!’ the man told goat-Bhagwan. ‘Why are you silent? You showed me a beautiful roop there, and spoke of lofty things. Why are you silent now? Tell my Guruji that You are Bhagwan, and show him that you are indeed Bhagwan!’

Bhagwan assumed His own roop and gave darshan to Guruji.

Thus, there are Gurus who give the darshan of Bhagwan to some as Shiva, and to some as Narayana. It is not that anyone who gives upadesha is a Guru. A Guru is one who turns you into a Guru, and you are able to make people get Bhagwan’s darshan. The greatness of the Guru is amazing!

Question: - What should we do to become samarpit to Bhagwan?

Answer: - If you could become samarpit simply by my telling you, how easy it would be!

Samarpan is when we offer ourselves totally and unconditionally to Bhagwan. We offer up all that we feel is ours. ‘*Patram, pushpam, falam, toyam yo me` bhaktyaa prayachchhati (Gita 9. 26)* – you can offer Bhagwan a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or a little water, and He will accept it if you offer it with prema. He is waiting to accept what you offer lovingly.

Yatkaroshi yadashnaasi yajjuhoshi dadaasi yat (Gita 9. 27) – whatever you do, whatever you eat, the homa you do, Bhagwan says, ‘offer it up to Me.’

I will tell you something about samarpan. A Mahatma lived on a small island in the middle of the Gangaji, between our village and Kashi. He was a wonderful, divine Sant. He had lived on this little island for over forty five years. This was when I was about eighteen or nineteen years old. I told the Mahatma, 'Maharaj, please make me samarpit to Bhagwan. Let me be completely offered up to Him.'

The Mahatma laughed heartily at my request. Then he told me, 'all right, Guru! Go home now. Come back tomorrow, and tell me if you can think of any object that is not already samarpit to Bhagwan, and I will do its samarpan.'

I went home and started to think. The earth belongs to Bhagwan; water belongs to Him, so do the other three elements of which everything is made. My nose, eyes, ears etc all belong to Him. They are not made by me, nor sustained by me. Then, what is mine? What is there in this shareer that belongs to me or is made by me? When nothing is mine, and I have no control over anything, how can I believe anything to be mine?

What object can there be, which does not already belong to Bhagwan? Even this shareer is made of the pancha bhoota – the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and space – that are created by Him. When the strength and temperature of the shareer reduces due to old age, no medicine can prevent its decline. Since everything is already samarpit to Bhagwan, what am I to do samarpan of?

I went to the Mahatma the next morning and said, 'Maharaj, I could not think of a single thing that is not samarpit to Bhagwan. What samarpan can I do?'

'Enough! Enough!' said the Mahatma. 'It is a bhram, a nasamajhi in the mana of a manushya that he is not Bhagwan's, and that all things are not Bhagwan's. This false understanding has become settled in the buddhi because of not knowing Bhagwan's swarup. There is a rope. If you don't know what a rope it is agnan, and if you mistake it for a snake that is a bhram.

All this is the grandeur of the Paramatma. To not know it is agnan and to think it is "mine" or "yours" is a bhram. It is the leela of the Brahman.'

Thus, the bhram of not being samarpit to Bhagwan reduces steadily as Gnan about Him increases. Else, the Aham-bhava – meaning, the ego – seeps in from somewhere or the other. Some people develop pride about their learning, intelligence, good looks, wealth, etc. Some pride about their person or possessions gets stuck to their ‘I’, and the ego is enhanced. This hampers samarpan. I have seen people whose nose is smut and they have a squint in one eye, but they talk about their well-formed chin and the curve of their cheek! Thus, in some way or another, people find something admirable in themselves and develop pride.

The Mahatmas say: *‘yatkritam, yatkarishyaami – tatsarvam na mayaa kritam – I have not done anything.’*

Then, who did it? How did it get done?

‘Mama naatha yadasti yosmyaham sakalam taddhi tavaiva maadhava – my Beloved Swami! Whatever I am and whatever is mine, is all You and all Yours.’

Niyatasvamiti prabuddhadheerathavaa kintu samarpayaami te`. When it is well-established that nothing exists but the Paramatma, what object can I dedicate to Bhagwan?

*Vapuraadishu yoapi kaaapi vaa gunatoasaani yathaa tathaa vidhah,
tadayam tava paadapadmamayorahamadyaiva mayaa samarpitah.*

Whatever may be in the five koshas of annamaya, pranamaya etc, and whatever guna-dosha there may be in me, (in samarpan Bhagwan doesn’t see the guna-dosha in the one who surrenders to Him) – this ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are samarpit in Your lotus feet. You have done this kripa on me that I am able to understand that I am Yours. Till now, I lacked this wisdom. I belonged to You, but I did not know it. Now You have bestowed this samajh on me.’

Even in samarpan there is one point that must be kept in mind. We talk a lot about samarpan-samarpan, but the Atma-bhava that is offered up to Bhagwan continues unabated. ‘I have done samarpan. I am Bhagwan’s bhakta.’ What have you understood? The fact is that the acceptance of our samarpan has to come

from Bhagwan. You have done the samarpan, but has Bhagwan accepted you as His, or not?

Shri Goswamiji has written:

Tuma apanaayo taba jaanihaun, jaba mana firi parihain.

(I will understand that You have accepted me when my mana does not turn back to the vishays of the sansara.)

Our mana is attached to the vishays of the sansara because of our svabhava; and our svabhava has to get attached to Bhagwan instead of the vishays of the sansara. Just as the nose, eyes, ears, mouth, chest, hands etc of our child are dear to us, we should have the same love for Bhagwan's shabda, sparsha, roop, rasa, and gandha. Then, our mana will turn away from the sansara and get attached to Bhagwan. The samarpan will be fulfilled.

Think of a scene embossed on a sheet of gold. There is a Mandir, a palace, flowers and leaves, Devtas and ghosts in the picture. It will be said that all these are samarpit in gold, because the whole scene is engraved on a sheet of gold. In the same way, this whole world is embossed by our mana in Bhagwan, and is samarpit in Bhagwan. It is this Gnan that is the actual samarpan.

Samarpan is not an action, or bhava, or a state. *Te`raa tumako saunpate` kyaa laagata hai mora* –what does it cost me to give You what is Yours?

The more your wisdom grows the more you will experience that you are samarpit to Bhagwan.

Question: - What does it mean, 'to live as being Bhagwan's'?

Answer: - 'To live as being Bhagwan's ' means that all there is, all that is happening, and all that will happen, is by the hands of our Beloved, Bhagwan. In this, there should be no ashanti and no asantosh in your mana.

You may have heard how the people in Vraja sing –

Jyon hee, jyon hee rakhiyata hau, tyon hee, tyon hee rahiyata haun.

‘He Hari! As You keep me, so I will stay. I will live by Your wish, not by mine. You can beat me, berate me, make me cry, or make me smile!’

When you feel that it is your Beloved who has made you laugh, and it is He who made you cry; He made you win and He made you lose – then, you see Bhagwan’s doing in all that happens. It is His art and His doing, so you feel anand. For a person who feels like this, nothing exists except Bhagwan. This is living for Bhagwan, not living for yourself.

Question: - Why did Raja Parikshit give Kali Yuga permission to stay in gold?

Answer: - Had he not done so, one Seth would have gathered all the gold in his house, and there would have been great fighting and grabbing for it. Because of this, gold was spread out a little, at least!

Wherever gold stays there is a portion of other people’s will come into it, and people will harass you for their share of it. Quarrels are inevitable. Gold was a dwelling place of the Kali Yuga from before; Bhagwan only pointed out to us, ‘look, My brother, beware of this! It is in your house. It will be the cause of misfortune and strife.

Jara, joroo, jameena, jhagade` ke` jada teen.

(Wealth, wife and land are the three roots of quarrels.)

Question: - Whose upasana is superior – the upasana of all the Devtas, or the upasana of one Devta, or the Devi who is the Primordial Mother and a combination of all the Devtas? If all of them are poorna and superior, should they all be worshipped as the Ishta, with equal respect?

Answer: - Actually, the Ishta is only the one Parameshwara. I have seen Mahatmas whose bhaktas dress them as Rama on Ramnavmi, as Krishna on

Janamashtami, and as Shiva on Shivaratri. The Mahatma is one, but he becomes different on different days. In the same way, the murtis in the Mandir is dressed at times as Rama with a bow in His hand, at times as Krishna with a flute in His hand, and as the Jagatjanani Jagadamba at times. To realize they are all one is another matter. If you once recognize Him you can do His puja in every form.

Some of us were in Karnavas with Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj. We took our evening bath in the Gangaji and gathered round Baba on the bank beside the river. Baba cupped sand in both hands and told me, 'Shantanu.....'

'Yes, Maharaj?'

'Look; until you have the anubhav that every grain of sand is the sakshat Paramatma, understand that your Gnan is incomplete.'

If you go into any shop of murtis in Jaipur you will find beautiful murtis of Rama, Krishna, Devi, and Shankar – the marble used is the same; only the murtis are different. In the same way, because of the difference in the bhakti of the individual, and the difference in the prema, Gnan, upadesh and adhikar of the shishya, the same Parabrahm Paramatma is shown as the different forms of the different Devtas. Bhagwan is the same in all the murtis. If you consider any one of them to be your Ishta, it does not mean that you are disdaining the Ishta of other people.

A lady marries a man. All men are superior, but for the lady her husband is special. She covers her head respectfully in the presence of his elder brother, treats his younger brother like a friend, looks after the children and does seva of the elders. She shows respect to all of them because of her relationship with her husband.

Similarly there is no harm in doing the puja of all the other Devis and Devtas with the relationship of the one Paramatma. Puja of the others is also His puja. Furthermore, if you see with the drishti of our Ishtadev, you will see that Ramachandra Bhagwan did the puja of Shankar Bhagwan, Shri Krishna did the puja of the Devi, and the gopis did the puja of the Devi and the Surya. So, when our husband shows respect and does puja of somebody, we should also show

respect and do their puja. So, make one your husband – your Ishtadev – and give respect to all who are related to Him.

Think of it thus – you have great prema for your husband. A relative or a dear friend of his comes to your house. Will you be disrespectful to that person? Of course not! You will welcome him respectfully.

Your Ishtadev is one, but all those related to Him – Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Vishnu, Jagatjanani Jagadamba – are luxuries of our Prabhu. You fold your hands to a Police Inspector, walk behind a Minister with all humility – that does not hinder your single-minded bhakti for Bhagwan, but to fold your hands to those who are related to Him becomes a hindrance in Bhagwan's single-minded bhakti?

Therefore, with great love:

Sabase`mimiye`, sabase`juliye`, sabakaa leekiye`naam,

haanji, haanji karate`rahiye`, baithi apane`thaanva.

(Meet everybody, mingle with all, and take everybody's name. Agree with them pleasantly but remain established in your Self)

Question: - What is the purport when a person is called 'charitravan'?

Answer: - when a person is called 'charitravan', it means that his behavior is such that he causes harm to none.

We should not behave in a way that harms anybody. Our indriyas should be restrained, our mana should be filled with goodwill for all, and our thoughts should be positive and lofty. Moreover, our ego should not be such that it suppresses and oppresses anybody. Put succinctly, the jeeva should be straightforward and simple. Thinking should be elevated and the feeling in the hriday should be magnanimous, elevated and free of deceit or prejudice. If a manushya has these he automatically stays within the boundaries of right behavior. He becomes a charitravan.

The main Ramayana in Valmiki's Ramayana – which contains several other stories – has a question:

'Chaaritrye`na cha ko yukttah – who is the manushya who has sat-charitra?'

The answer gives a description of Shri Ramachandra.

Valmiki did not ask about the gunas Bhagwan has. His question was, 'who is the manushya who has these gunas?' In answering his question Naradji said, 'Shri Ramachandra has all these gunas.'

Valmiki asked this question with a purpose, and so he first described the lakshans, and the answer automatically got connected with Shri Ramachandra. Rama has not been called a manushya from the drishti of avidya. If you want to learn about any charitra you can learn it from Rama. If you want to know about the charitra of a brother, learn it from Bharat, Lakshman and Shatrughna. If you want to learn about the charitra of a Swami learn it from Shri Rama. If it is the charitra of a mother or father you want to know, learn it from Kausalya and Dashrath. They are shining examples of charitra. Our antahkarana is purified by just thinking of them. All the famous charitras given in our Itihasa-Puranas are such that by just remembering them we are able to perceive the right path for us, and progress in the right direction.

Question: - What are paapa and punya?

Answer: - Paapa is that, which results in a fall from the path of what is right. It is harmful for us and for others. Punya is that, which uplifts us and others.

Punya means the pavitrata of the hriday, and paapa means that, from which nobody can protect us until it has given its fruit. Of course, Bhagwan can, if He wants; but otherwise, a manushya has to suffer the consequences of his wrongdoings.

The Baba of Mokulpur came to our village once. We were walking behind him. Before we entered the village a man came and put his child at Baba's feet. 'Baba! Please save this child! He is getting epileptic fits!'

Baba said, 'my brother, this illness is the fruit of the paapa he has done in his previous birth. He will have to suffer for his wrong actions. He won't be cured until he has finished enduring the fruits of his paapa. If some other person is prepared to take his suffering on his behalf, the child can be cured.' Many people were present but nobody was willing to take the child's bhoga.

And so, my brother, we all have to suffer for the wrongs we do.

As per the rules of Vyakaran, 'paa' means protection. It is a root work. 'Pa' means, the belief that a person has strayed from the right path. A person who does paa+pa cannot escape the consequences of what he has done. Sooner or later he has to suffer for it. No matter how much he shouts and laments the paapa will have its influence on him.

The simple and straightforward meaning of paapa and punya is that any action that causes suffering to you, to someone else, or to all, is paapa. And, and action that is elevating for you, for someone else or for all, is punya. Punya is what makes the hriday pavitra, and paapa is what cannot be destroyed until its fruit has been endured.

And – yes! If you obtain the Paramatma, there remains no paapa and no punya!

Question: - Please tell me of a method by which the hriday can remain filled with goodwill for all.

Answer: - My brother, don't look at all; look into your hriday. Don't be selective in your sadbhava. The surya gives daylight to all and the Chandrama gives moonlight to all – their actions are in keeping with their swarup.

Take a good look at yourself and see whether your behavior is in keeping with your swarup or not.

I had gone to somebody's house for a meal. The cook made puris which were very thick. The lady of the house flung down the serving plate when she saw them. 'How can I serve such thick puris?' she said angrily. We are not to see who is the one who eats; we are to see who is the one who gives. You are an ansha of the Sacchidananda, advitiya Paramatma. You have become an ansha because of being covered by the gross and subtle shareers, and other influences. So, if – in spite of being an ansha of the Sacchidananda Prabhu – you give durbhava, durguna, and durvachan to anybody, will it be suited to your swarup?

See everybody in a way that is in keeping with your swarup. Your swarup is to give jeevan to all and anand to all. Just as the sun and moon give effulgence to all, unconditionally, in keeping with their swarup, behave in a way that is in keeping with your swarup. Fold your hands and talk smilingly to one and all. Look at them with prema in your eyes. Offer them something to eat, if you have something to offer, otherwise offer them water. That, at least, is something everybody has. Sweep the floor and spread a mat for them to sit on. You will surely have a mat in your house.

Trinaani bhoomirudakam vaakchaturthee cha soonritaa,

e`taani vai sataam ge`he` nochchhidyante` kadaachana.

Offer your visitor a straw mat to sit on. If you don't have one, clean the floor and ask him to sit down and sit with him. Offer him a glass of water to drink, and use your tongue to speak with sweetness. Give sukha to whoever you meet, by offering them the best of what you have.

Question: - How should we do the Ishwara's puja?

Answer: - Do the Ishwara's puja by speaking with your mouth, using your tongue to take His name, do His stuti, and do paatha. Do His seva with your hands and do pradakshina with your feet. In short, do Bhagwan's puja with all the means He has given you.

When Seths go anywhere, they don't carry any money. The money is kept with the assistant who pays for whatever the Seth wants. Everything you have – your shareer, wealth, buddhi, etc is for the seva of the Ishwara. Do Bhagwan's seva with all the things you consider to be yours.

Question: - Just as a mother, father and elders tell their children what is good for them, please tell us what is good for us.

Answer: - Well, now! Was I talking all this time about things that were not good for you? This is something very amusing, my brother! Raja Pratardan went to Swarga once. The Devtas had just defeated the Daityas in a war, and Indra was in a very good mood. He was very pleased with Raja Pratardan. 'Ask for any boon. I shall grant it,' he said.

Pratardan said, 'Maharaj, this is something I do not know. I don't know what boon I should ask for. *Yade`va hitanam tade`va no broohi* – please tell me what will be of hita for me, because I don't know what I should ask for and what bhoga I should do.'

This episode is given in the Kaushiki Upanishad.

When Indra heard Pratardan's words, he said, 'know me – *maama vijaaneehi* – when you know my swarup you will know your own swarup. Then, you will understand everything correctly. Otherwise, you will be throwing stones in the dark – this is good and that is bad; that is good and this is bad. You will get raaga for the good and dvesha for the bad.'

The fact is we cannot understand what is good and what is bad. We hear people talk about things. Our thinking is also influenced by the vasanas of our mana, and we make erratic decisions.

Therefore, my brother, a person who is free of vasanas and is in the shuddha-swarup of his Atma, is one with the Paramatma. Try to know him. Strive to know what he is and understand him. In knowing him, by knowing him, and in becoming one with him – there is hita, only hita and nothing but hita.

I am telling you what is absolutely true, with full authority, that from the adi-anadi srishti – as long as this srishti remains – as long as we isolate ourselves from the Paramatma by remaining separate from Him, we will keep running round like a deer in a desert looking for water. We will perish in the effort to get sukha. Nobody can ever get sukha in the vishays of this sansara.

Renowned scholars come to me and weep. Some are older and some younger than me. People who have enormous wealth and great power remain dukhi. Handsome and glamorous people are dukhi. People who are considered to be very intelligent are dukhi. The mana of the Yogi is not settled. Even those who go into a Samadhi are dukhi because the Samadhi ends after some time. That being the case, if we remain connected to the Paramatma during our waking state when we are fully conscious, nothing can be a greater benefit. There can be no greater sukha.

I know that many people take the Ishwara's name to enhance their own image. They decorate their shareer and proceed to increase its beauty. They run the risk of their shareer becoming their Master. The Paramatma becomes an ornament of their shareer!

The best thing is for us to make ourselves an ornament of the Paramatma. The greatest hita is that we do not merge with anything that is the anatma, is anitya, achit, and leads to dukha. Instead, we should merge with the Sacchidananda advitiya Paramatma. It is in this that the kalyan of every manushya rests, and this is the greatest hita.

Question: - Vrittis are indications of separateness. Then, what is the actual purport of the Brahmakara vritti?

Answer: - Oh my brother! It seems some Brahmagnani has appeared, to ask this question!

I agree that the vrittis are all separate, but the abhava of vrittis – the prohibiting of vrittis – results in shanti, and that shanti is not separate. The substratum of all,

in which our own non-presence seems to exist as present, is one, and therefore, it cannot create any kind of separateness.

The fact is, that which we call '*nivrittikaala*' – meaning, a state of thoughtlessness, which is the Atma, is what is called the Brahmakara vritti. The vritti at the time of sakshatkara is the remover of agnan. The vritti after a person has got Gnan is, itself, the Brahman.

Question: - I understand that Bhagwan does not catch us because of our sadgunas or leave us because of our durgunas, but why doesn't He stop the people who have obtained His kripa from doing wrong things?

Answer: - The thing is that so many are Bhagwan's own that He would go mad if He were to try and stop every wrongdoer! His own people are so numerous that they cannot be counted!

Another point is, what we consider to be wrong may not be wrong in the eyes of Bhagwan.

A child smeared ink on himself. His mother saw this and said, 'come on; I will give you a hot water bath and scrub away the ink stains. I would not have intervened with your play, but since you have dirtied yourself I have got the chance to make you clean.'

What is wrong in our drishti – is it also wrong in the drishti of the Devta? And does the Ishwara see as wrong what we and the Devtas see as wrong? My brother, the laws are different in different countries. The laws in America, Europe, Africa and Asia are all different.

First, match your drishti with Bhagwan's drishti. I will tell you something frankly – if your drishti is not aligned to Bhagwan's, there are two viewpoints and one of them will be wrong. If your thoughts, Gnan, and conclusions differ from Bhagwan's either you or He will be wrong.

If you want to see yourself in your correct form, and want to see the origin and conclusion of this world in its correct form, align your drishti with the Ishwara's drishti. See the world as He sees it. There is some doubt whether your viewpoint and understanding are correct or not. This is certainly a little difficult to do, but see as wrong what the Ishwara sees as wrong, and see as right what He sees as right. It is not that you are more intelligent than the Ishwara! So, align your buddhi with His.

If you say that the Ishwara follows each person the way a policeman follows a suspect, or a shepherd follows his sheep, that is another matter!

Now, consider one more point. The Ishwara does not want to keep anybody enslaved the way Nadir Shah did! Bhagwan has given everybody the freedom to do his work. A person who smears dirt on himself will be cleaned, like a dhobi beats the cloth to remove all the dirt. That is not punishing the clothes; it is cleaning them. It is not giving dukha to the cloth; it is removing the dirt. The dirtier the cloth, the more severe its treatment.

Please note one thing: if you put cloth directly in the fire it will get burnt to ashes, but if you put it in hot water the dirt gets washed off without harming the cloth. The shuddha Gnan of the Vedantis burns dvaita – duality does not exist for one who has absorbed the pure Gnan of Vedanta. The Gnan of the Bhagwan that has come into the dvaita, however, cleanses the dvaita. It purifies the antahkarana. Thus, the Gnan that has come in the form of Bhakti makes our hriday shuddha, and the Gnan that has come in its true form burns up the dvaita-prapanch.

Do you want that the child should not be allowed to play, because his clothes will get dirty? Do you want that he should not learn writing because ink will stain his hands and clothes? All this is Bhagwan's kripa. He permits His children to work and play freely, and gives them a thorough scrubbing when they do wrong things. He stands by and watches.

Bhagwan has made an arrangement that His child will never die, not even if he jumps into a well. He has arranged that the jeeva will never perish. The jeeva never dies – that is Bhagwan's system. The jeeva never loses his consciousness –

this is arranged by the Ishwara. (This is regarding the jeeva, not the shareer.) Bhagwan's system is that no jeevatma will be dukhi forever. Sukha will follow dukha and dukha will follow sukha in everybody's jeevan.

Bhagwan's arrangement is vast and thorough. The more you think of how unique it is, the more your hriday will be cleansed with regard to Bhagwan. I am telling you something unasked – when you see Bhagwan's kriya with a positive attitude, meaning, what Bhagwan does is very good your hriday will become limpid. But if you feel that what Bhagwan does is very bad, your hriday will become murky.

Therefore, to think about Bhagwan positively is called 'manan', and thinking about Him negatively is called 'tarka-vitarka'.

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

Glossary

Abhava - *abhaava* - absence, lacking

Abhiman – *abhimaana* - pride, vanity, arrogance

Achit - lacking consciousness

Adhibhoota – pertaining to gross matter.

Adhidaiva – pertaining to divinity

Adhikara - *adhikaara* - to have the right, to be qualified

Adhikari - *adhikaari* - eligible, qualified

Adhyatma-vidya – *adhyatma-vidyaa* – the science of metaphysics, spiritual matters

Adhyatmik - *adhyaatmika* - pertaining to spiritual matters

Adhyatmik – *adhyaatmika* – spiritual, pertaining to the metaphysical

Agam - difficult

Agni - fire

Ahankara – *ahankaara* – the subtle pride of individuality

Ahlad – *aahlaada* – delight

Aishwarya – grandeur like the Ishwara's

Aishwarya - grandeur, majesty

Ajar - not subject to decay and old age

Akara – *aakaara* – form, shape

Akash – *aakaasha* – the sky, space

Amara - undying

Amrita - the elixir that bestows immortality

Amrita – the elixir that bestows immortality

Amritva - the quality of being amrita

Anadi - *anaadi* - without a beginning

Anand – happiness, bliss, enjoyment

Anant – infinite, endless

Anant - without an end
Anatma - *anaatmaa* - that which is not the Atma
Anitya - transient
Annamaya - the sheath of food
Ansha – a part
Antahkarana – the fourfold mind composed of the mana, buddhi, chitta and ahankara
Antarmukha – the mind turned within
Antaryami – *antaryaamee* – the one who abides in all hearts
Antaryami - *antaryaami* - the one who dwells within
Anubhav – experience
Anuraga – *anuraaga* – affection, love, attachment
Aparadh – an offence,
Aparoksha - known through the senses
Apashabda – bad language
Aradhana - *aaraadhanaa* - worship
Archanam - worshipping
Asakti - *aasakti* - attachment, weakness for someone or something
Asana - *aasana* - a Yogic posture, a mat to sit on
Asantosh - dissatisfaction
Ashanti - *ashaanti* - absence of peace
Ashirvad – *aashirvaada* – blessing
Ashraya – *aashraya* - shelter, refuge, protector
Ashuddha – impure
Astha – *aasthaa* – belief
Astik - *aastika* - a believer
Asura - a race of demons
Atmanivedanam - *aatmanive`danam* - offering up yourself completely to

Bhagwan

Avidya – *avidyaa* – nescience, believing the world to be permanent

Bahirmukha – the mind turned to the outer world

Bandhan – fetters, to be bound

Bhagavadakara – *bhagavadaakaara* – the form of Bhagwan

Bhagavad-akara - *bhagavad-aakaara* - the form of Bhagwan

Bhagavad-bhava – *bhagavad-bhaava* – the feeling that this is Bhagwan

Bhajan – loving meditation of Bhagwan

Bhakta-vatsal - having motherly love for His bhaktas

Bhakti – loving devotion

Bhava – *bhaava* – feeling, existing

Bhiksha - *bhikshaa* - begged food

Bhokta – *bhokta* - the one who has the pleasant or unpleasant experience

Bhram - false understanding, delusion

Brahmakara vritti - *brahmaakaara vritti* - thoughts focused on the form of the Brahman

Bua - father's sister

Buddhi – the intellect, the thinking mind

Chakra - discus

Chakra – discus

Chandan – sandalwood, sandalwood paste

Chandrama – *chandramaa* – the moon

Charitravan - *charitravaana* - having a noble character

Chinatanmani - *chintaamani* - wish-fulfilling stone

Chinmaya - filled with consciousness

Chintan - giving serious thought

Chintan – reflecting on some point

Chitta - state of mind

Chitta – state of mind

Daan - charity

Daan – charity

Daitya - a type of demon, sons of Diti

Daivi Sampatti – the wealth of divine qualities

Damaroo – a small double sided drum

Danda-kasrat - pushups

Darshan – the sight of a revered person, a school of philosophy

Darshan Shastra – philosophical system

Dasyam - *daasyama* - serving

Desha - *de`sha* - place, space

Devi – *de`vee* – a goddess, Parwati

Devta - *de`vtaa* - divine power

Dhaam - a holy place

Dharana - *dhaaranaa* - holding the subject of meditation steadily in the mind

Dharati – the earth, the ground

Dharma – the right behavior for the individual

Dheya - *dhe`ya* - the object of meditation

Dhyana - *dhyaana* - meditation

Diksha - *dikshaa* - formal initiation

Divya - pertaining to the divine

Dosha – defect, fault

Dravya – substance, liquid

Drishti – vision, viewpoint

Drishti – vision, viewpoint

Dukha – sorrow, suffering.

Durbhava - *durbhaava* - ill-will, hatred

Durguna - bad qualities, faults

Durvachan - abuses
Dushkarma - bad deeds
Gada - *gadaa* - mace
Gada – *gadaa* – mace
Gali-galauch – *gaali-galaucha* – using abusive language
Gandha - smell, fragrance
Gati - movement, progress
Ghatakara vritti - *ghataakaara vritti* - thoughts of the form of a pot
Gnanendriya – *gnaane`ndriya* – the five sense organs
Grihastha Ashram - *grihastha aashrama* - the stage of a married householder
Guna – the three tendencies of Sattva (giving right thinking), Raja (strong urges and restlessness) and Tama (giving sloth and delusion). Guna also means attributes
Gunateeta - beyond the influence of the three gunas
Gurutva - the quality of being a Guru, heaviness
Heere – *heere`* - diamonds
Hita – benefit
Homa - offering oblations in the sacred fire
Hriday – the seat of emotion
Ichha - *ichhaa* - wish
Ishta – chosen form of worship
Itihasa - *itihaasa* - history
Jagadamba - *jagadambaa* - the Mother of Creation
Jagatjanani - the Primordial Mother
Jala - water
Janamashtami - *janamaashtami* - the birthday of Krishna
Janeu - the sacred thread
Japa – ritual chanting

Japa – ritual chanting
Jeeva – a sentient being, the Atma attached to a body
Jeevan – life, manner of living
Jeevan-bodha – the proper understanding of life
Jeevanmukti - being completely free of identification with the body
Jeevan-satta - *jeevana-sattaa* – the existence of life
Ji - a respectful address
Jignasa - *jignaasaa* - a wish to know about spiritual matters
Jignasu – *jignaasu* – a person who wants to know about Bhagwan
Kaala - time
Kaala – time
Kali Yuga – the age of Kali
Kalpa-vriksha - wish-fulfilling tree
Kama-dhenu - *kaama-dhe`nu* - wish-fulfilling cow
Kamana - *kaamanaa* - desire
Karma – action, deed, a ritual
Karma-Kaanda - Vedic rituals
Karmendriya – *karme`ndriya* – the five organs of action
Karta – the doer of an action
Kartavya - duty, that which should be done
Karuna - *karunaa* - compassion
Kirtan - singing Bhagwan's glories
Kosha - one of the five imaginary sheaths that cover the Atma
Kripa – *kripaa* – compassion; Grace; favor
Kripalu – *kripaalu* – compassionate
Kriya – *a* – action
Kriya – *kriyaa* – action
Kusadhan - *kusaadhana* - wrong kind of sadhan

Lakshan – characteristic, distinguishing feature

Leela - *leela* - frolic, play

Leela – *leela* – frolic, play

Lobha - greed

Lobha - greed

Lokeshana - the wish to rule

Madhurya - *maadhurya* - sweetness, appeal

Mahat Tattva – the great element that is divided into the five elements

Mahatmyagnan – *mahaatmyagnaana* – Gnan about the greatness

Mahavakya – *mahaavaakya* – the ultimate statement that ‘You’, the Atma, are the Brahman

Mahima – *mahimaa* – greatness, glory

Mala – *maalaa* – garland, prayer beads

Mala – *maalaa* – prayer beads, a garland

Mamata – *mamataa* – the feeling ‘this is mine’.

Mana – the emotional mind

Mangal – spiritual good fortune

Manovritti - mental inclination

Mantra – a group of words with mystic powers

Mantri – Minister

Manushya – a human being

Marg - *maarga* - path, road

Maryada - *maryaadaa* - the boundary of what is right

Mata – system of opinion

Mimansaka - of the Mimansa Darshan

Mrityu - death

Mukti – freedom from rebirth

Murti – statue, idol

Naam – name

Naiyayik - of the Nyaya Darshan

Namah - to bow down

Namaskara – *namaskaara* – folding hands respectfully, bowing the head

Narmadeshwara – *narmade`shwara* – A Shivaling from the bed of the Narmada river

Na-samajhi - *naa samajhi* - lack of wisdom

Nastik - *naastika* - a non-believer

Navadha bhakti - *navadhaa bhakti* - nine kinds of bhakti

Neeti Shastra – the rules of right conduct

Nididhyasan - *nididhyaasana* - bringing the mind back repeatedly to the subject of meditation

Ninda - *nindaa* - to criticize, slander

Ninda-stuti - criticism-praise

Nirguna – the Brahman with no form or attributes

Nirguna – the Brahman without form or attributes

Nisadhan - *nissaadhana* - having no sadhan

Nishiddha - prohibited

Nishkama - *nishkaama* - without selfish desire

Nishkamata - *nishkaamataa* - being free of selfish desires

Nishtha - *nishthaa* - faith

Nitya - eternal, done daily

Nivedan – *nive`dana* – placing some point humbly

Niyam - self-imposed rule

Nyaya - *nayaaya* - justice, what is fair and logical

Paatha – passages from religious books

Paatha – reciting passages from holy books

Padartha – *padaartha* – substance

Padaseva - *paadase`vaa* - serving Bhagwan's feet
Padma - lotus flower
Padma – lotus flower
Pantha – a religious Sect that worships Bhagwan in a particular form
Param – supreme, highest
Paramartha – *paramaartha* – meaning, the greatest achievement
Parichhina - separate, fragmented
Parikrama - *parikramaa* - to circumambulate as worship
Paroksha - unseen, like Swarga
Pashutva - lowly tendencies
Pata – a piece of cloth
Patakara vritti - *pataakaara vritti* - thoughts of the form of a cloth
Paurush - human endeavor
Pavitra – pure according to the Shastras
Pavitra – pure according to the Shastras
Pavitrata – *pavitrataa* – purity
Pikdaan - spittoon
Pitambar - *pitaambara* - yellow stole
Poorna - complete, whole
Poornananda - supreme anand
Prabhu - Bhagwan
Prabhu – Bhagwan
Prakar - *prakaara* - type
Prakrit – *praakrita* – natural, pertaining to Prakriti
Praman – *pramaana* – proof, the argument that establishes
Pranamaya - *praanamaya* - the sheath of the prana
Pranav - the letter 'Om'
Pranayam - *praanaayaama* - Yogic breath control exercises

Prani – *praanee* – a living being
Prapanch - the interactive world
Prapatti - to take the protection of someone
Prapti - *praapti* - to obtain
Prarthana – *praarthanaa* – prayer
Prarthee – *praarthee* – one who is saying the prayer
Prasad – *prasaada* – food offered to Bhagwan and distributed as His blessing
Pratyaksha - evident
Pravritti - activity
Preeti – love
Premi – *pre`mee* – one who loved
Pripoorna – absolutely full
Prithivi - the earth
Pujari – *pujaari* - a priest, one who does puja
Punyatma - *punyaatmaa* - a good and benevolent person
Purana - *puraana* - ancient legends
Purushartha – *purushartha* – fundamental human desires – Dharma (right behavior, Artha (worldly success), Kama (worldly desires) and Moksha (release from rebirth).
Raksha - *rakshaa* - protection
Ramnavami - *raamanavami* - the birthday of Rama
Rasa - sweetness, sweet emotion
Rati – love, infatuation
Rishi-Muni - Sages, Mahatmas, Seers
Roop – appearance, beauty, form
Sacchidanandaghana - *sacchidaanandaghana* - Ghana +filled with the Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Anand = pure bliss; the Brahman
Sadbhava - goodwill

Sadbhava – goodwill, benevolence
Sadguna – good qualities, virtues
Sadhak – *saadhaka* – a person who strives for spiritual progress
Sadhan - a method used for spiritual progress
Sadhana - *saadhanaa* - effort for spiritual progress
Sadhan-bhajan – *saadhan-bhajan* – the effort for spiritual progress and loving meditation
Saguna – the Ishwara with form and attributes
Saguna – the Ishwara with form and attributes
Sakara – *saakaara* – with form
Sakhi - lady friend
Sakhya - friendship
Sakshat –*saakshaata* – incarnate
Sakshi - *saakshi* - witness, uninvolved observer
Samadhi - a state of deep meditation
Samarpan - offering up unconditionally
Samartha – capable
Sampradaya – *sampradaaya* – a religious Sect started by a Master
Samyam – self-restraint
Sanat Kumar - the four sons of Brahmaji who are always little boys
Sankalpa – a firm resolve
Sankalpa – a resolve
Sanmatra - *sanmaatraa* - pure existence
Sansara – *sansaara* - the interactive world
Sansari – *sansari* - a person involved in worldly values
Sanskara - *sanskaara* - subtle subconscious impressions
Sant – a person totally dedicated to Bhagwan
Sanyoga – being together, circumstances

Sarvagna – all-knowing, omniscient
Satkarma – good deeds
Satpurusha - worthy man
Satsang – to listen to spiritual talks with the desire to understand the purport
Satta – *sattaa* – existence, authority
Sattvik - of the Sattvaguna
Seth – a wealthy businessman
Shaap – curse
Shabda – sound, a word
Shabda – sound, word
Shakti – power, strength
Shaligra – *shaaligraama* – a round stone worshipped as Vishnu Bhagwan
Shankha - conch shell
Shankha – conch shell
Sharan – refuge, shelter
Sharanagata – *sharanaagata* – one who takes refuge
Shareer – the gross body
Shastra – books giving and explaining the rules of righteousness
Shila – *shilaa* – stone
Shishya - student, disciple
Shraddha - *shraddhaa* - faith
Shraddha – *shraddhhaa* – faith
Shraddhalu – *shraddhaalu* – one who has faith
Shravan – to listen to a talk with a desire to understand the full purport
Shuddha – pure
Shuddha chetan - *shuddha che`tana* - pure consciousness
Shuddha-vastu – the pristine object, Bhagwan
Siddhi – supernatural power, success in some endeavor

Smaran – to remember, to think of
Sookshma – subtle
Sootra – aphorism, short rule
Sparsha - touch
Sthitapragna – an enlightened person
Sthoola– gross
Stuti - eulogy
Sugam - easy
Sukha – complete contentment, feeling of complete satisfaction
Sukhi – fully contented
Sundar - beautiful
Sundari - a beautiful woman
Svabhava – *svabhaava* – essential nature
Svabhava – *svabhaava* – intrinsic nature
Svaha - *svaahaa* - the word uttered when offering oblations in the sacred fire
Swami –*svaami* – Master
Swarup – essence, true form
Tapa – severe asceticism
Tapasya - *tapasya* - severe asceticism
Thakurji – *thaakurjee* – Bhagwan
Tyagi – *tyaagee* – one who renounces
Uchchhrinkhal – unrestrained
Upadesh - *upade'sha* - teaching
Vada-vivada - *vaada-vivaada* - controversy
Vaikunth - the realm of Bhagwan Vishnu
Vairagya – *vairaagya* – detachment, disinterest for worldly matters
Vandanam - saluting, bowing down
Vani –*vaanee* – speech

Vanshidhvani - the sound of the flute
Vasana – *vaasanaa* – avid desire, lust
Vayu - air, wind
Vichar – *vichaara* – deep thought
Vichar – *vichaara* – serious thought
Vidhi - the proper method
Vidvan - *vidvaana* - scholar, learned person
Vidya – *vidyaa* – knowledge, skill
Vikar - *vikaara* - mutation, change
Vilakshan - wonderful, extraordinary
Vimal - pure, faultless
Vishvas – *vishvaasa* – staunch faith
Vishvas – *vishvaasa* – trust, confidence
Vivaksha - intention
Viyoga – separation
Vrata – self-imposed discipline
Vritti – mental inclination
Vritti – mental inclination, propensity
Vyakaran – *vyaakarana* – Sanskrit grammar
Vyavhar – *vyavahaara* – behavior, social interaction
Yagna – a worship of sacrifice, offering oblations while chanting mantras
Yagna-Yaag – Vedic rituals where oblations are poured into the sacred fire and mantras are chanted, for the fulfillment of some desire
Yoga - attaching yourself to Bhagwan

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